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DEADPOOL®

CLASSIC

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Can't get enough of the Merc with a Mouth? Well, have we got the book for you, collecting Deadpool's incredibly hard-to-find early appearances — titanic team-ups, anthology antics and gratuitous guest-shots by the sassin' assassin! From hanging with Marvel superstars Nomad and Silver Sable, to giving a much-needed sales boost to losers like Wolverine and the Avengers, the erstwhile Secret Defender (shhh!) and Hero For Hire (sweet Christmas!) sure gets around.

Collecting *Nomad (1992) #4*, *Secret Defenders #15-17*, *Wolverine (1988) #88* and *#154-155*, *X-Force (1991) #47* and *#56*, *Heroes for Hire (1997) #10-11*; and material from *Avengers (1963) #366*, *Silver Sable & the Wild Pack #23* and *#30*, *Wolverine Annual '95* and *'99*, *Contest of Champions II #4*, *Marvel Comics Presents (2007) #10*, and *Breaking Into Comics the Marvel Way #2* — written by Fabian Nicieza, Tom Brevoort, Mike Kanterovich, Larry Hama, Rob Liefeld, Eric Stephenson, Jeph Loeb, John Ostrander, Glenn Herdling, Gregory Wright, Christopher Golden, Marc Andreyko and more; and illustrated by Pat Olliffe, Gerry Decaire, Bill Wylie, Rob Liefeld, Adam Pollina, Pasqual Ferry, Scott Kolins, Mike Gustovich, Isaac Cordova, Ben Herrera, Walter McDaniel and more.

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DEAD-POOL®

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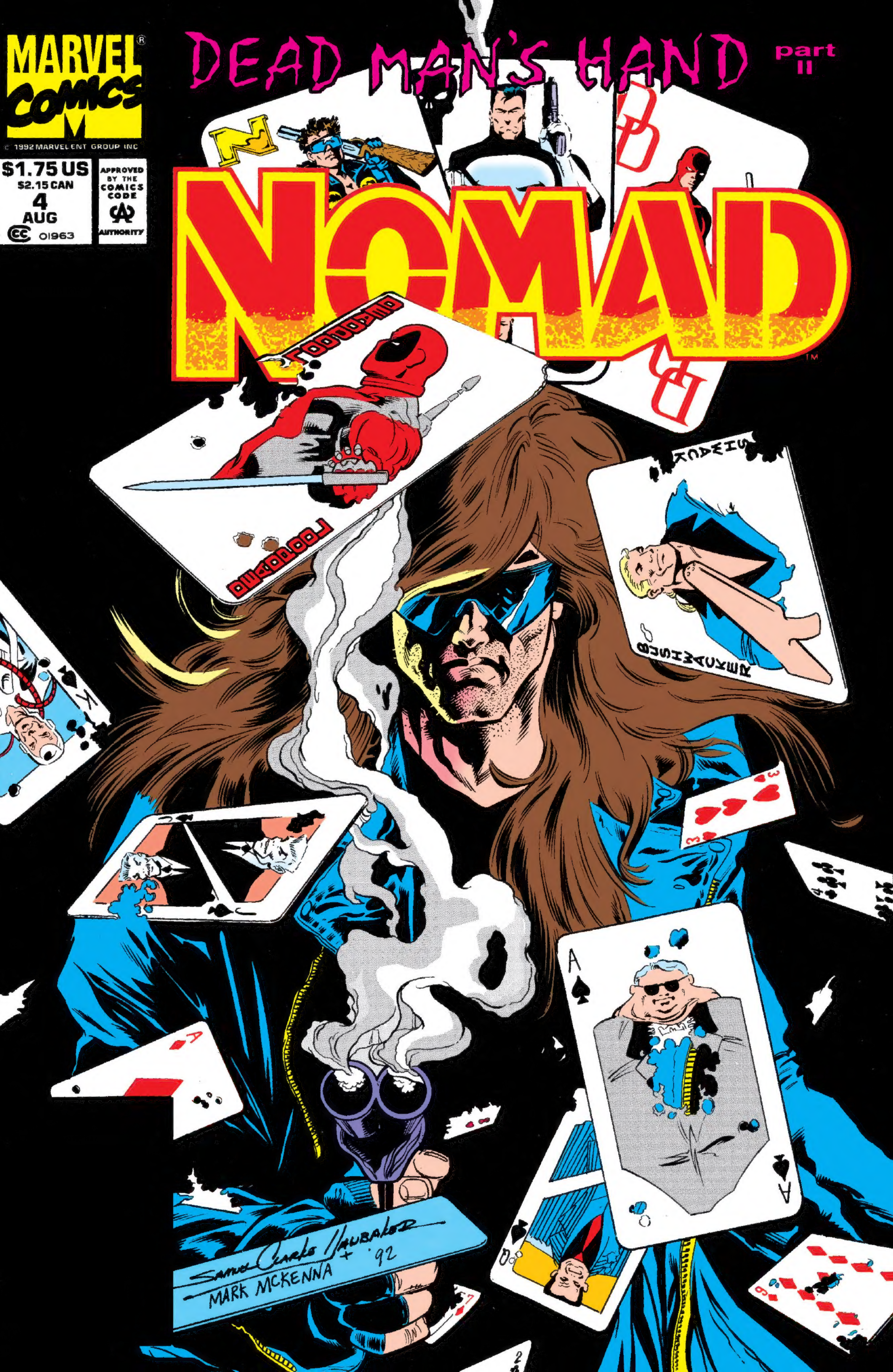
MARVEL® COMICS
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AUG
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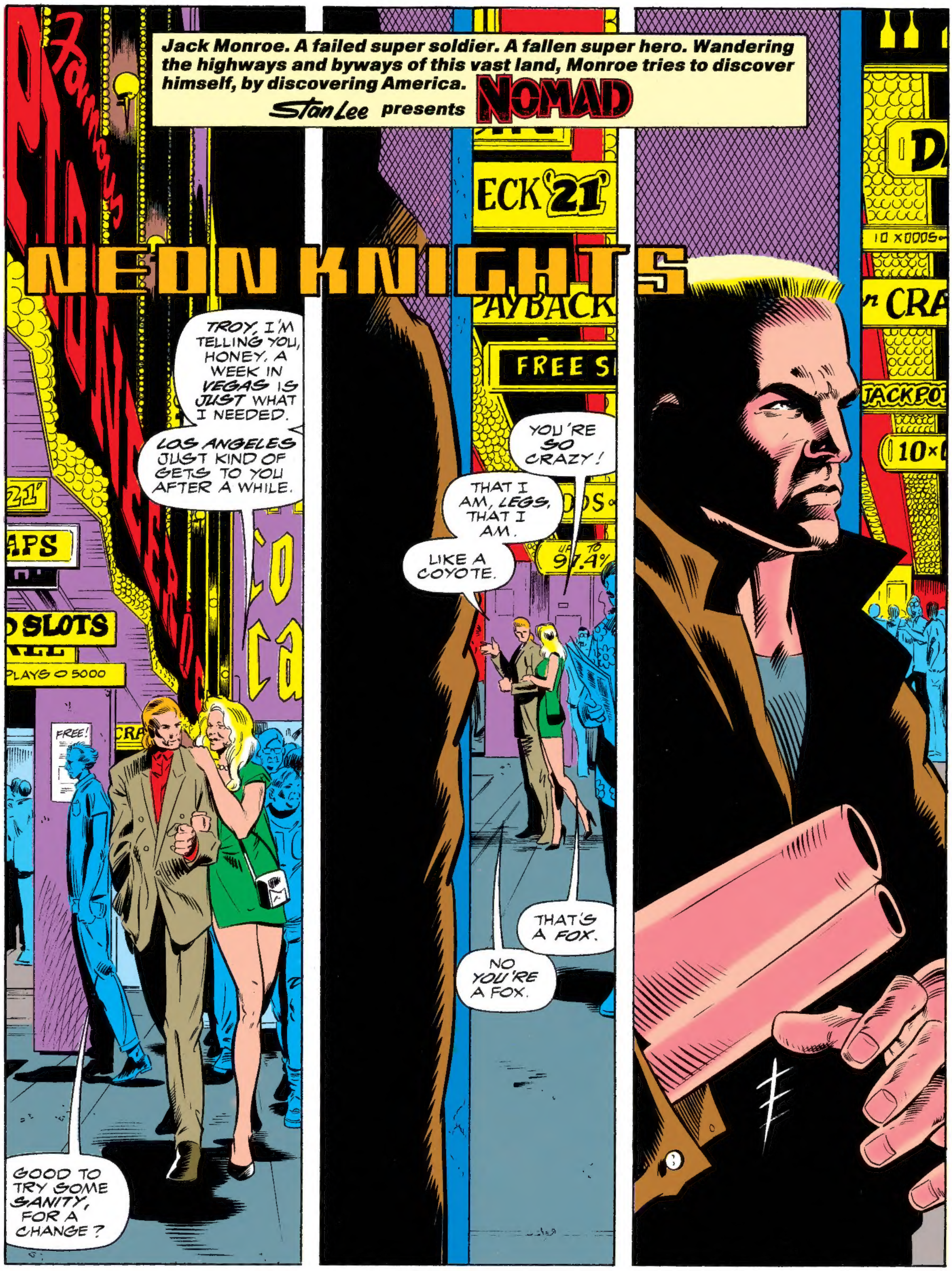
DEAD MAN'S HAND part II
NOMAD™
DEADPOOL
DEADPOOL
Samuel Clarke Haubaker + '92
MARK MCKENNA


Jack Monroe. A failed super soldier. A fallen super hero. Wandering the highways and byways of this vast land, Monroe tries to discover himself, by discovering America.
Stan Lee presents NOMAD
NEON KNIGHTS
Famous
'21'
APS
SLOTS
PLAYS 5000
FREE!
CRA
TROY, I'M TELLING YOU, HONEY. A WEEK IN VEGAS IS JUST WHAT I NEEDED.
LOS ANGELES JUST KIND OF GETS TO YOU AFTER A WHILE.
GOOD TO TRY SOME SANITY, FOR A CHANGE?
ECK '21'
PAYBACK
FREE S
UP TO 97.4%
YOU'RE SO CRAZY!
THAT I AM, LEGS, THAT I AM.
LIKE A COYOTE.
THAT'S A FOX.
NO YOU'RE A FOX.
10 X ODDS
CRA
JACKPOT
10×

FABIAN NICIEZA Writer
PAT OLLIFFE Penciler
MARK McKENNA Inker
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS Letterer
STEVE MATTSSON Color Art
GLENN HERDLING Editor
TOM DeFALCO Editor In Chief

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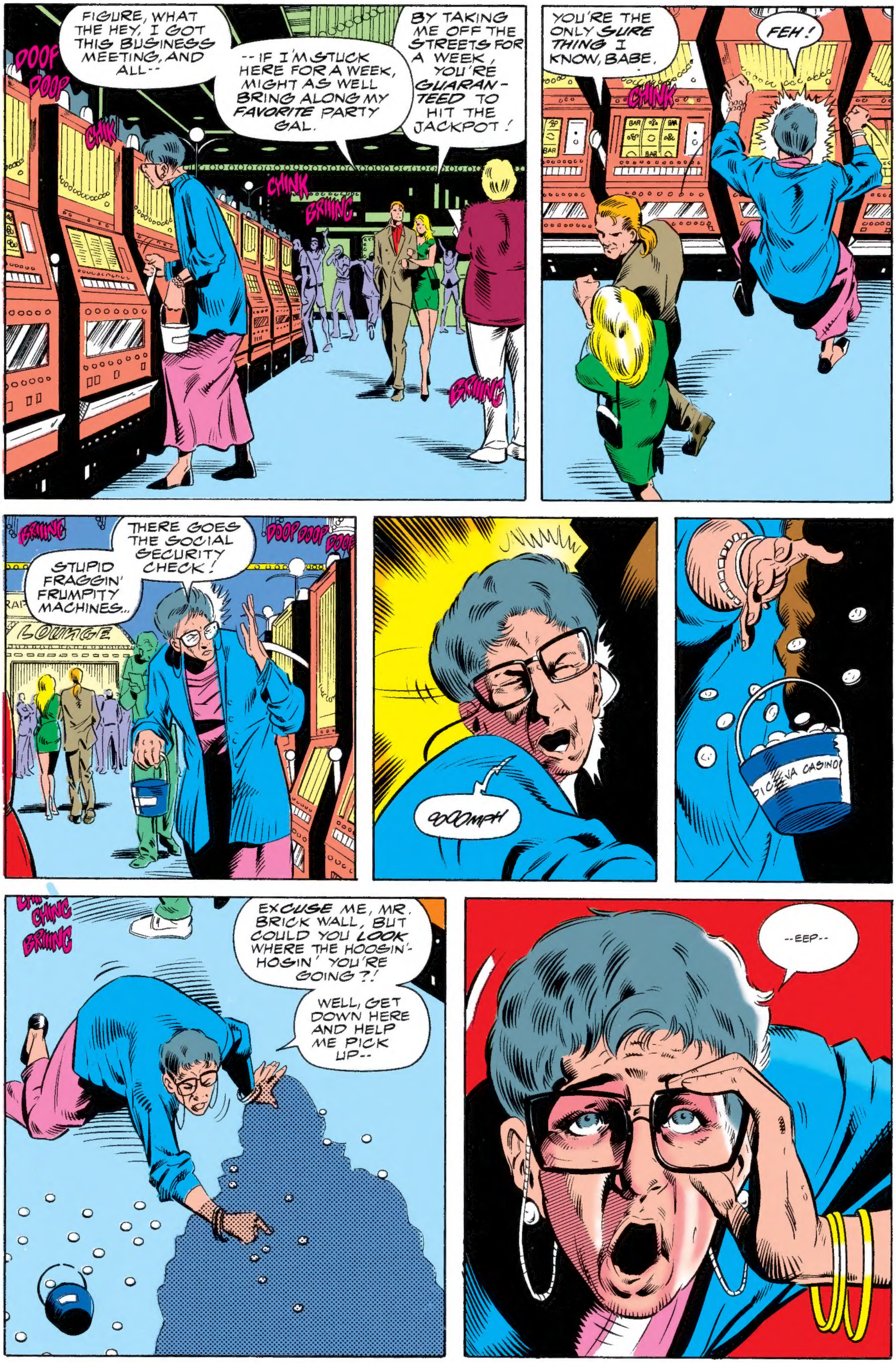
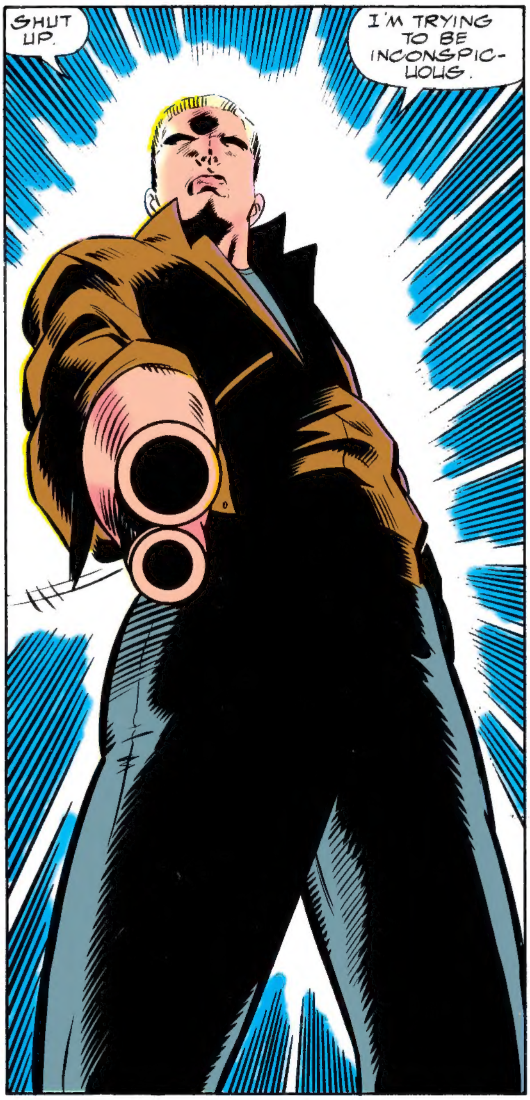
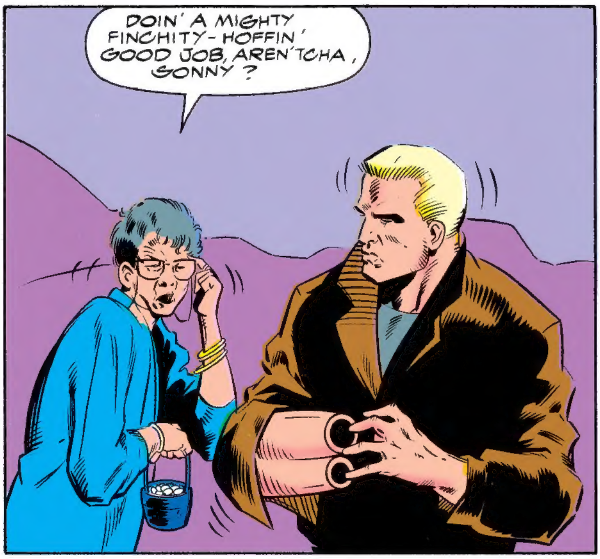

DOOF DOOP
CHIK
FIGURE, WHAT THE HEY, I GOT THIS BUSINESS MEETING, AND ALL--
--IF I'M STUCK HERE FOR A WEEK, MIGHT AS WELL BRING ALONG MY *FAVORITE* PARTY GAL.
BY TAKING ME OFF THE STREETS FOR A WEEK, YOU'RE *GUARANTEED* TO HIT THE JACKPOT!
CHINK
BRIIING
BRIIING
YOU'RE THE ONLY *SURE THING* I KNOW, BABE.
CHINK
FEH!
BRIIING
THERE GOES THE SOCIAL SECURITY CHECK!
STUPID FRAGGIN' FRUMPITY MACHINES...
DOOP DOOP DOOP
LOUNGE
OOOOMPH
PIC VA CASINO
CHING CHING BRIIING
EX*CUSE* ME, MR. BRICK WALL, BUT COULD YOU *LOOK* WHERE THE HOOSIN'-HOSIN' YOU'RE GOING?!
WELL, GET DOWN HERE AND HELP ME PICK UP--
--EEP--


SHUT UP.
I'M TRYING TO BE INCONSPICUOUS.


DOIN' A MIGHTY FINCHITY-HOFFIN' GOOD JOB, AREN'TCHA, SONNY?

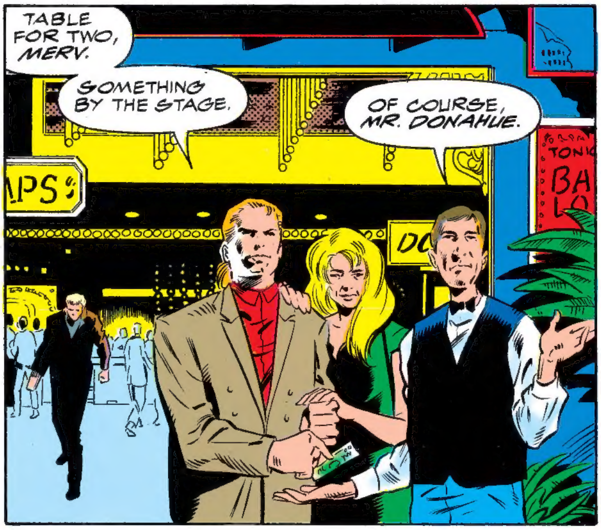
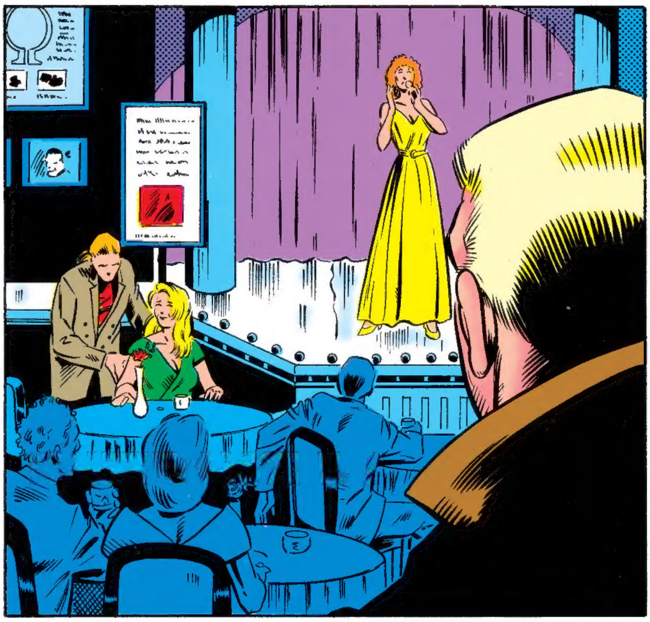
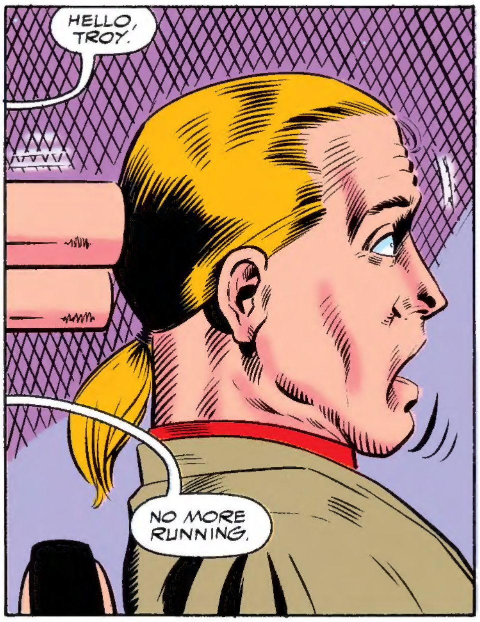
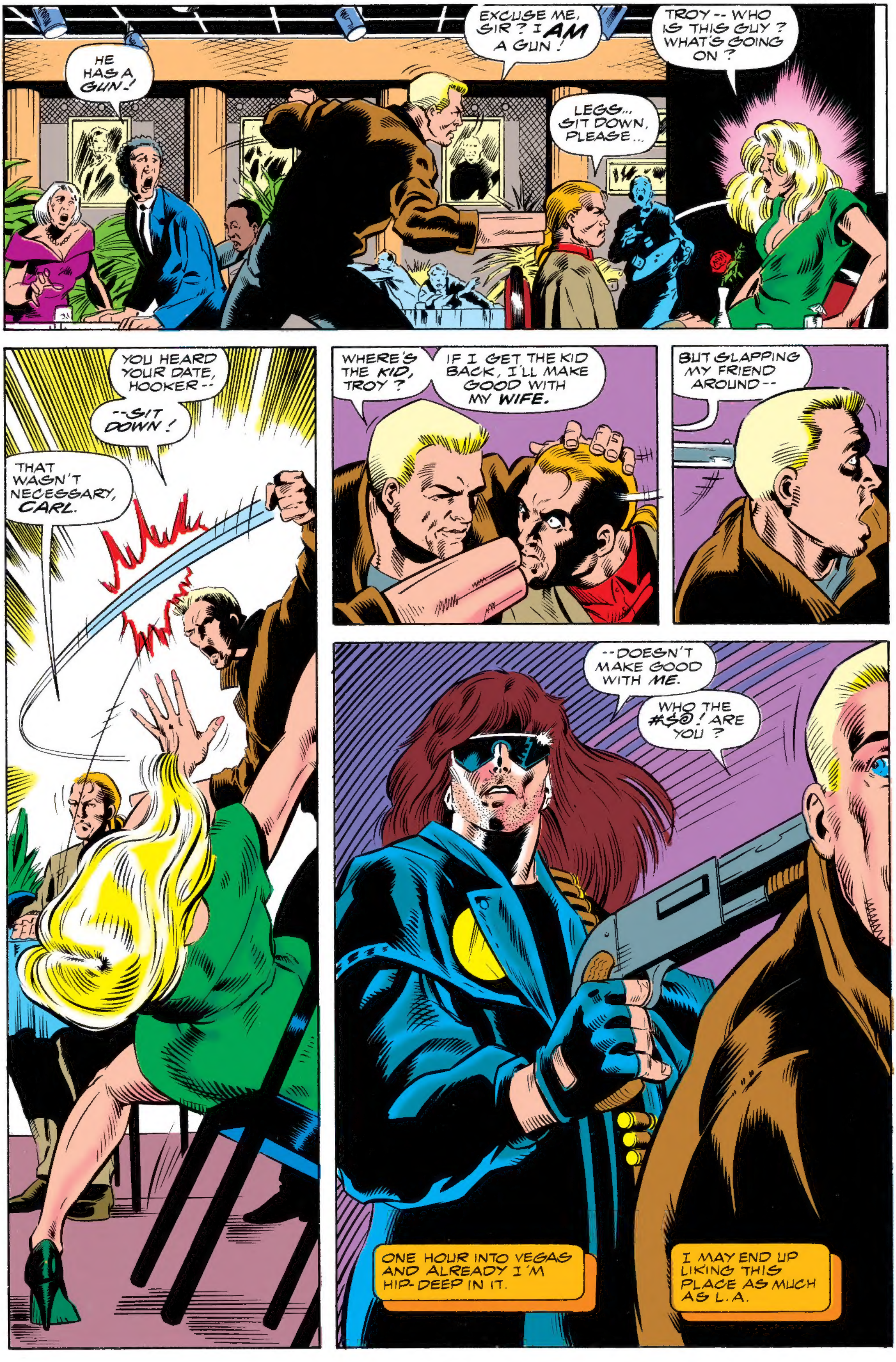
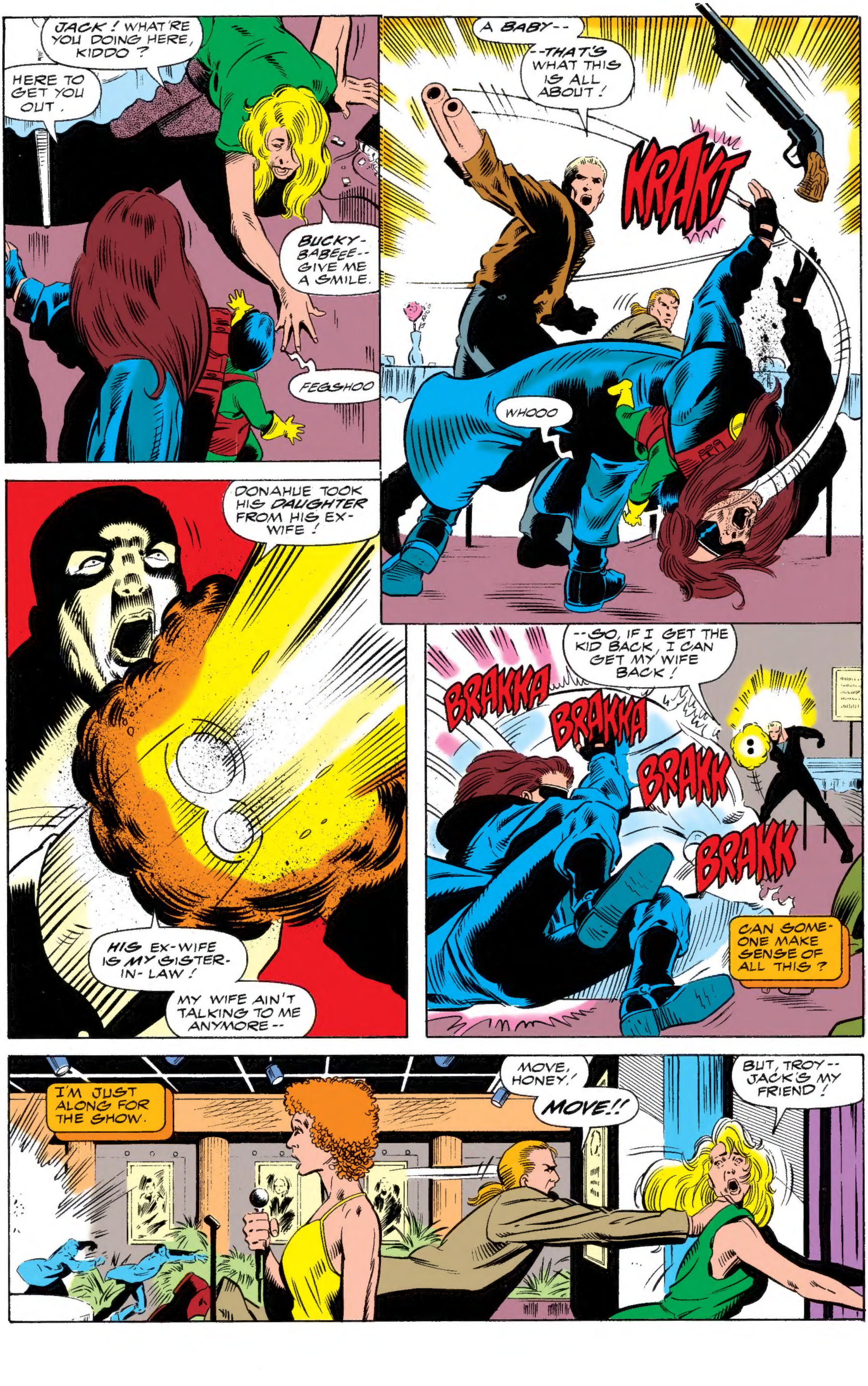


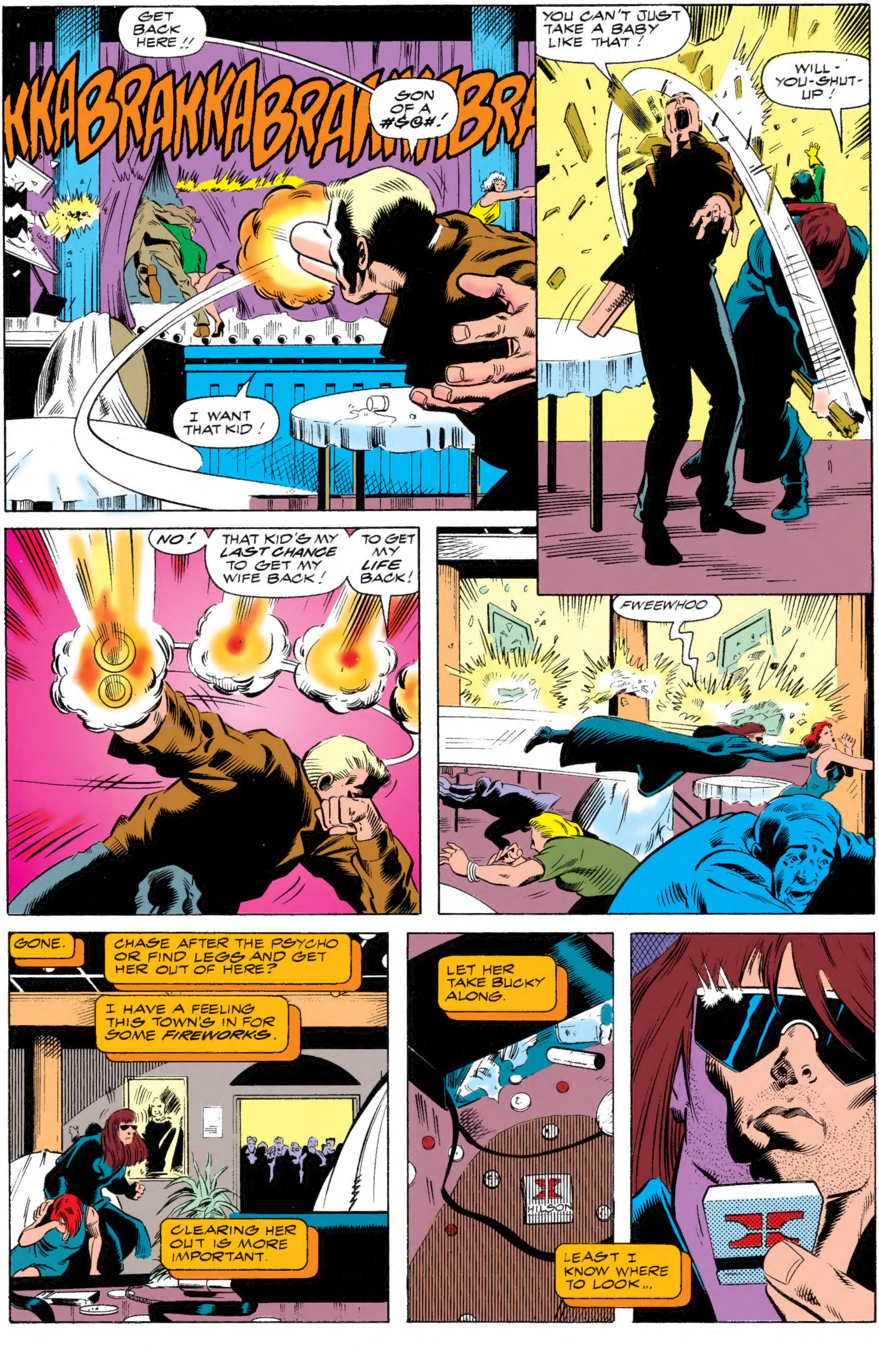
TABLE FOR TWO, MERV.
SOMETHING BY THE STAGE.
OF COURSE, MR. DONAHUE.

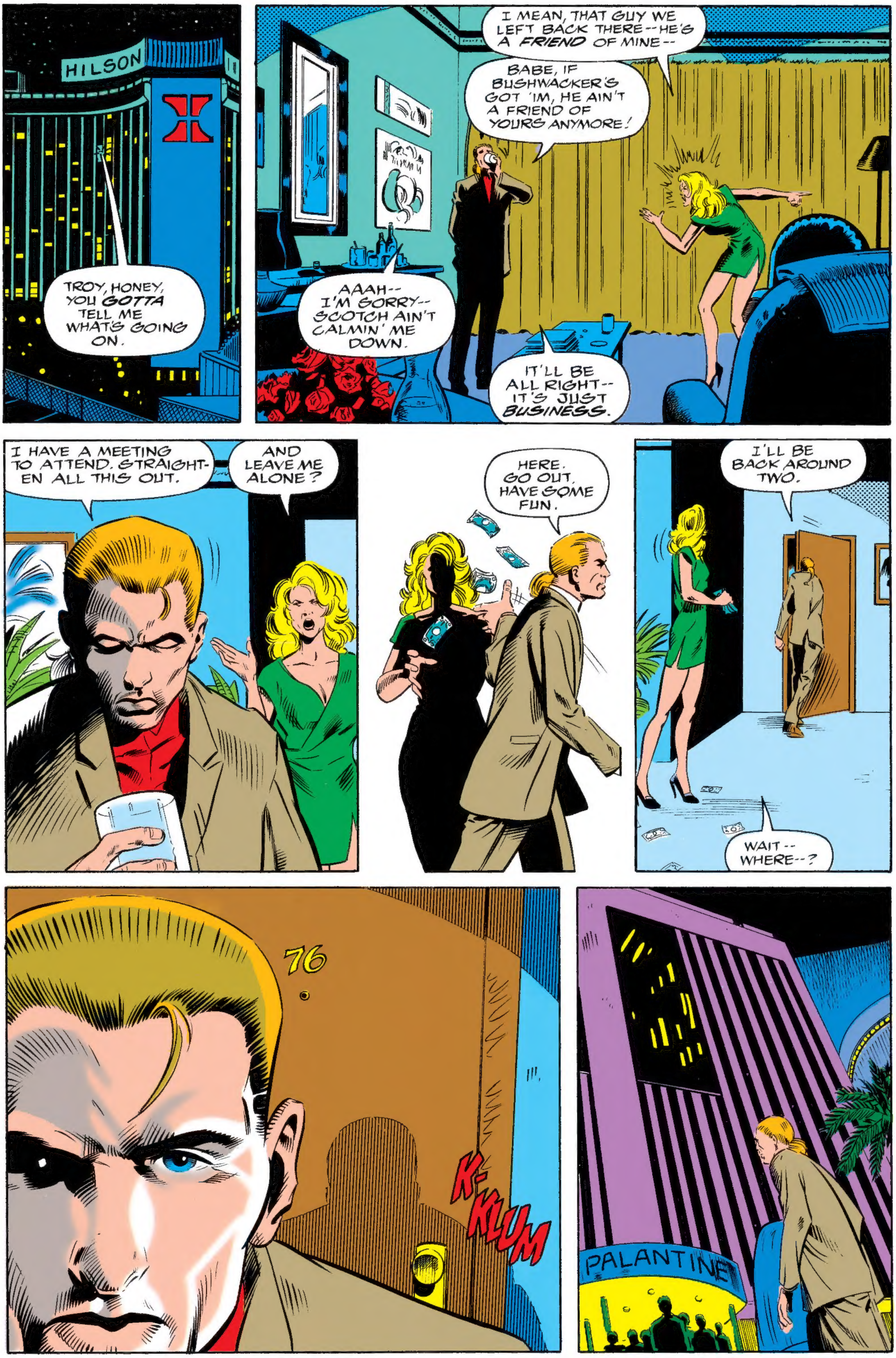


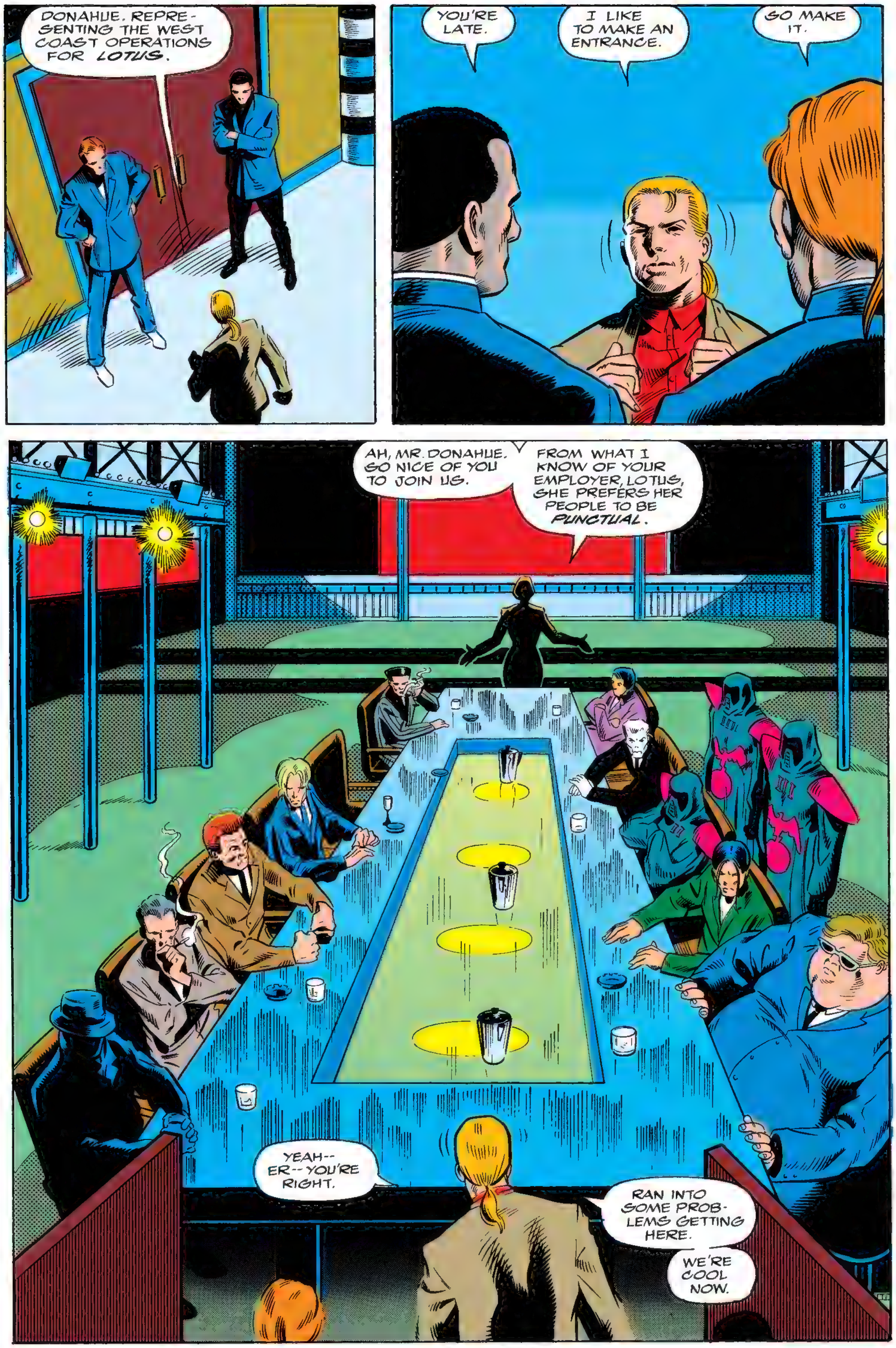

HELLO, TROY.
NO MORE RUNNING.

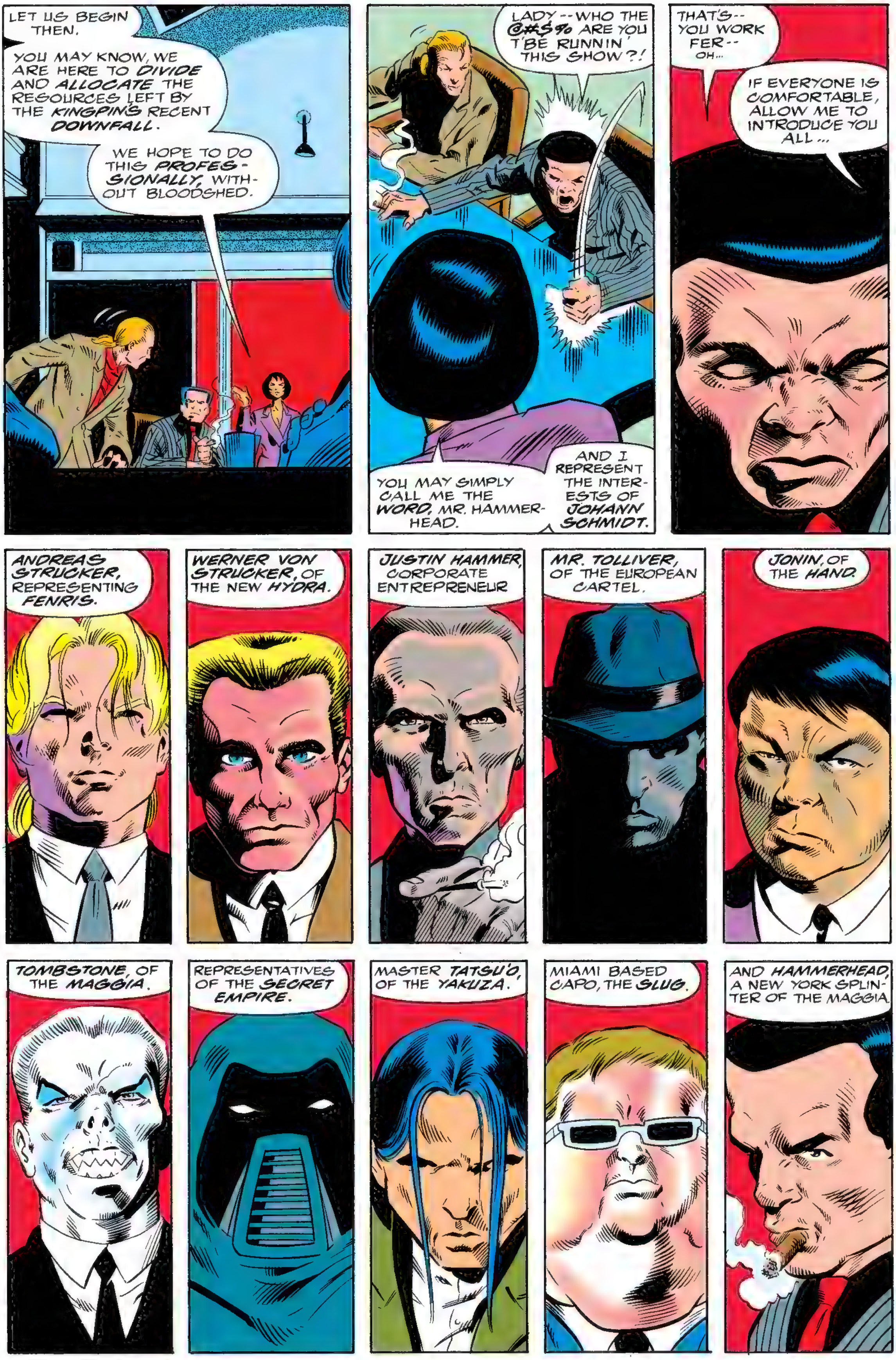

HE HAS A GUN!
EXCUSE ME, SIR? I AM A GUN!
TROY -- WHO IS THIS GUY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
LEGS.. SIT DOWN, PLEASE...
YOU HEARD YOUR DATE, HOOKER--
--SIT DOWN!
THAT WASN'T NECESSARY, CARL.
WHERE'S THE KID, TROY?
IF I GET THE KID BACK, I'LL MAKE GOOD WITH MY WIFE.
BUT SLAPPING MY FRIEND AROUND--
--DOESN'T MAKE GOOD WITH ME.
WHO THE #$@! ARE YOU?
ONE HOUR INTO VEGAS AND ALREADY I'M HIP-DEEP IN IT.
I MAY END UP LIKING THIS PLACE AS MUCH AS L.A.

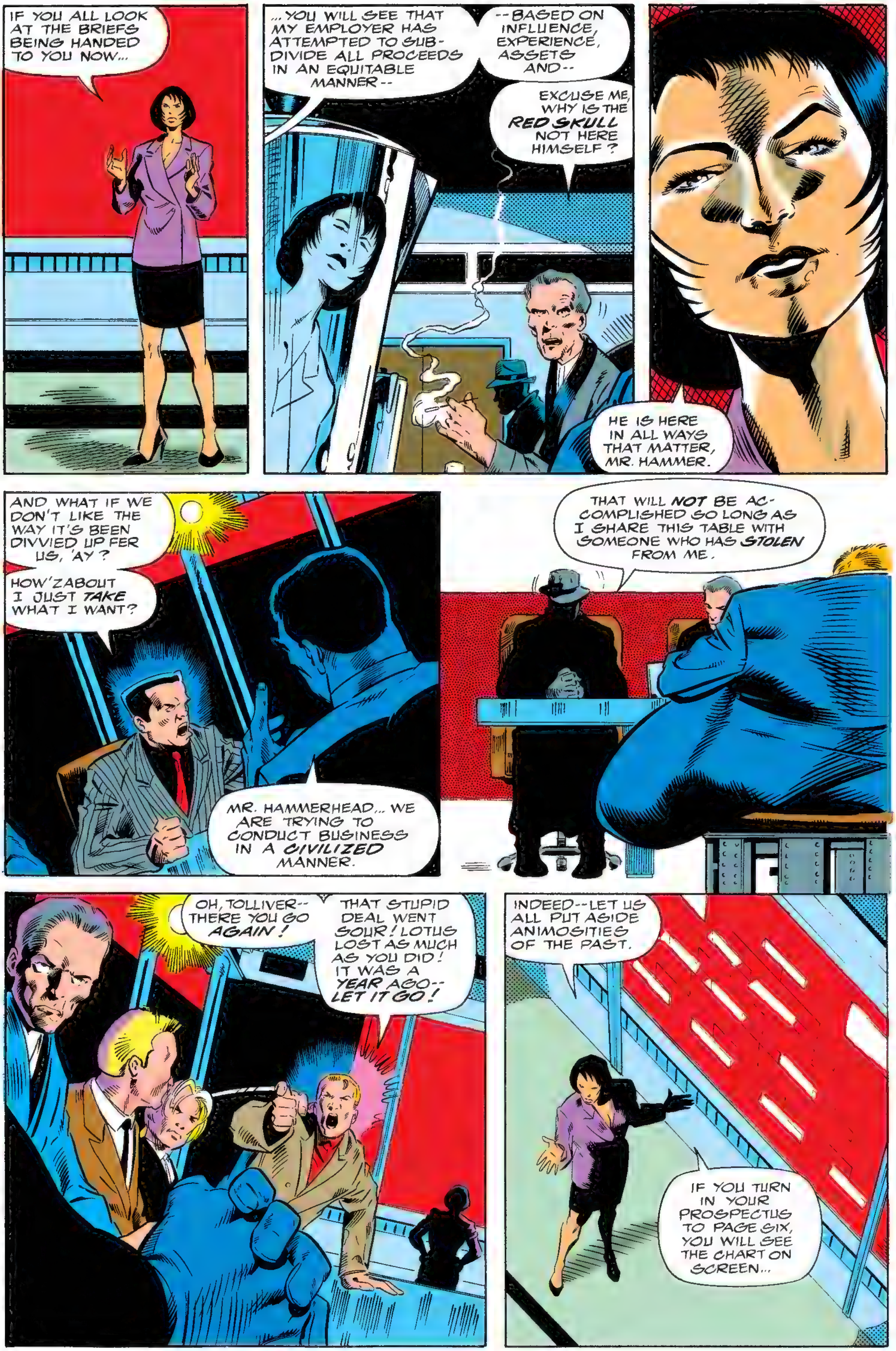

JACK! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, KIDDO?
HERE TO GET YOU OUT.
BUCKY-BABEEE--GIVE ME A SMILE.
FEGSHOO
A BABY--
--THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
KRAKT
WHOOO
DONAHUE TOOK HIS DAUGHTER FROM HIS EX-WIFE!
HIS EX-WIFE IS MY SISTER-IN-LAW!
MY WIFE AIN'T TALKING TO ME ANYMORE--
--SO, IF I GET THE KID BACK, I CAN GET MY WIFE BACK!
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKK
BRAKK
CAN SOMEONE MAKE SENSE OF ALL THIS?
I'M JUST ALONG FOR THE SHOW.
MOVE, HONEY!
MOVE!!
BUT, TROY--JACK'S MY FRIEND!

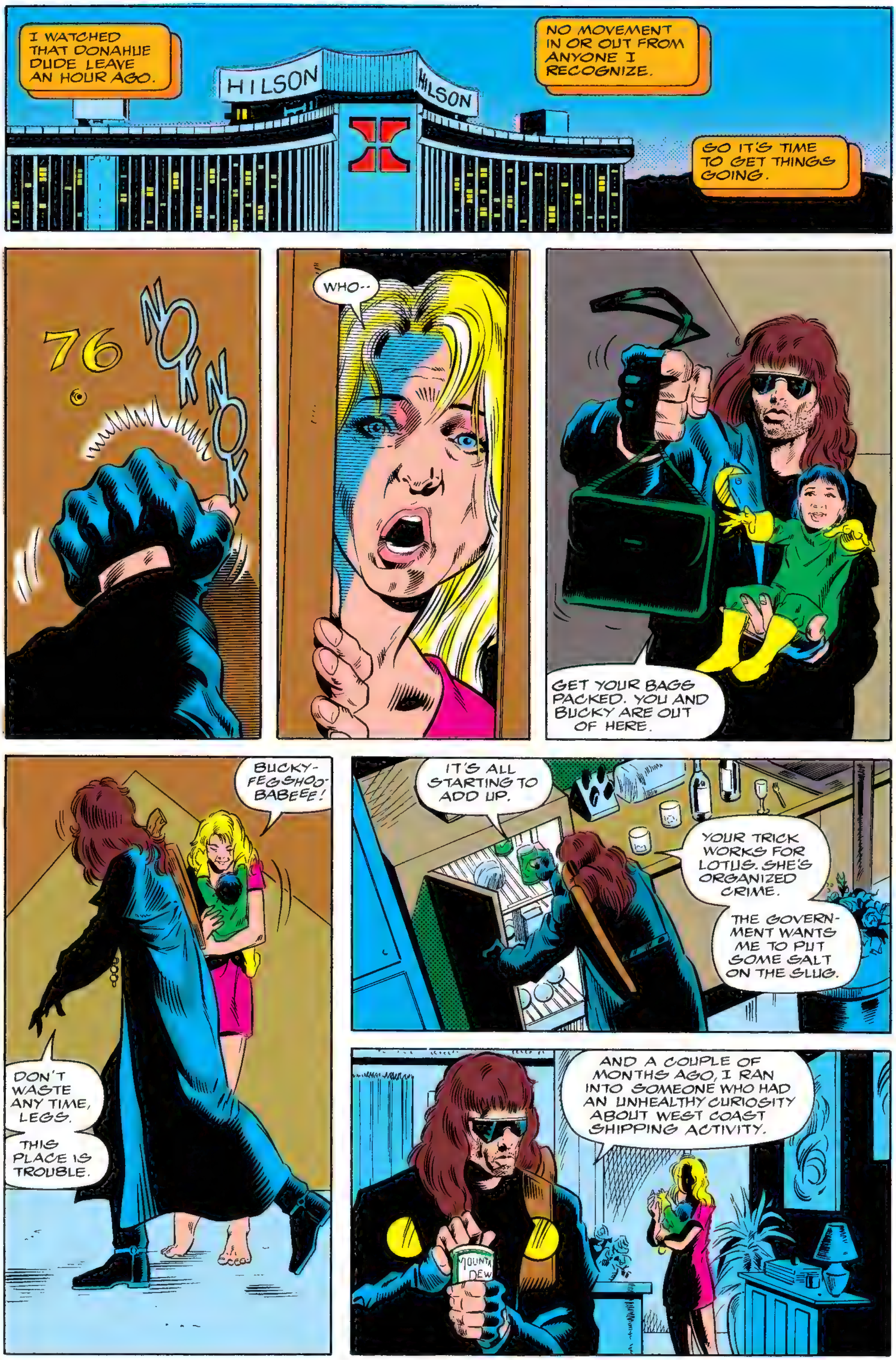

GET BACK HERE!!
KKABRAKKABRAKKABRA
SON OF A #$@#!
I WANT THAT KID!
YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE A BABY LIKE THAT!
WILL-YOU-SHUT-UP!
NO!
THAT KID'S MY *LAST CHANCE* TO GET MY WIFE BACK!
TO GET MY *LIFE* BACK!
FWEEWHOO
GONE.
CHASE AFTER THE PSYCHO OR FIND LEGS AND GET HER OUT OF HERE?
I HAVE A FEELING THIS TOWN'S IN FOR SOME *FIREWORKS*.
CLEARING HER OUT IS MORE IMPORTANT.
LET HER TAKE BUCKY ALONG.
HILSON
LEAST I KNOW WHERE TO LOOK...

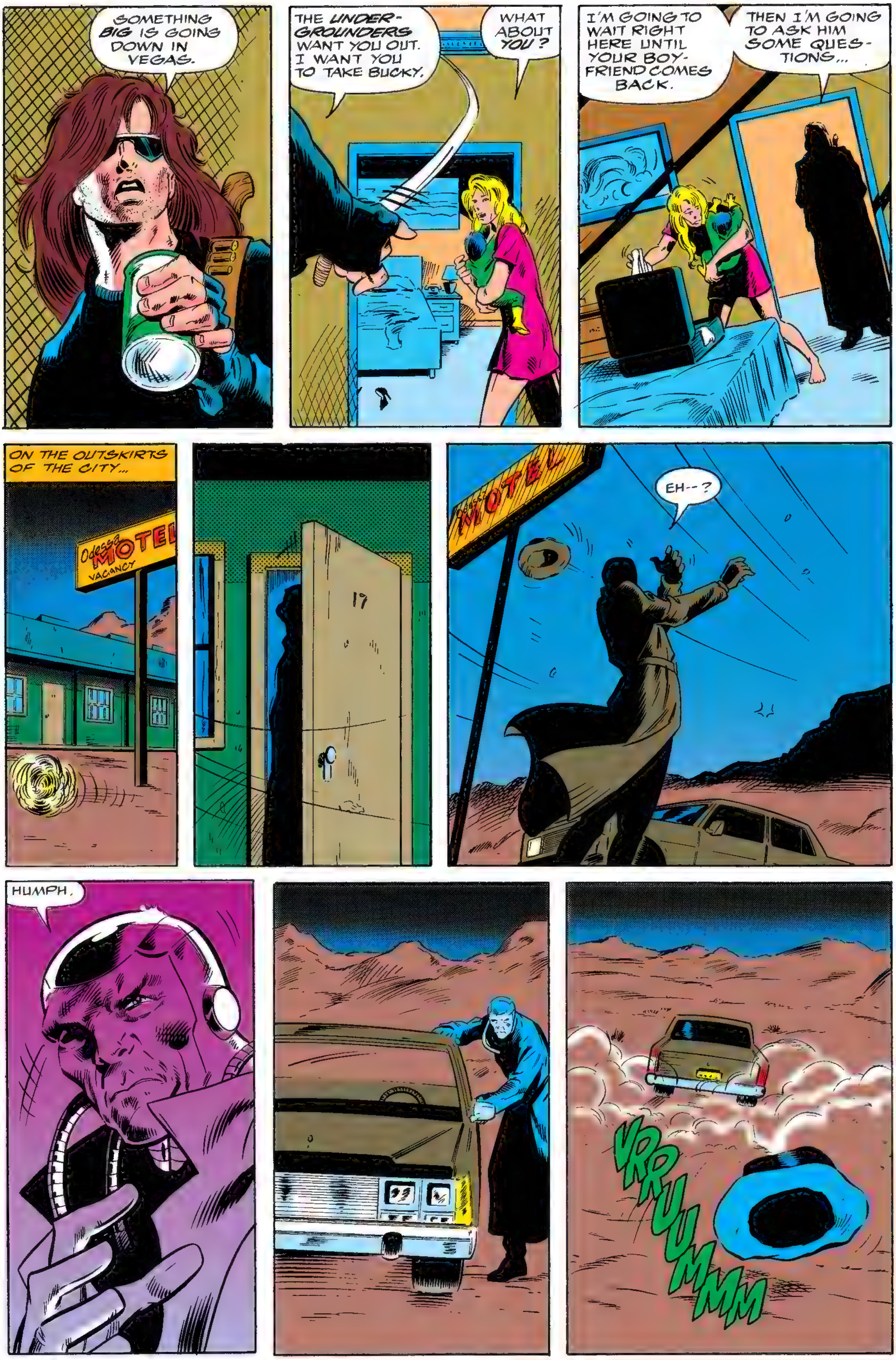

HILSON
TROY, HONEY, YOU *GOTTA* TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON.
I MEAN, THAT GUY WE LEFT BACK THERE--HE'S A *FRIEND* OF MINE--
BABE, IF BUSHWACKER'S GOT 'IM, HE AIN'T A FRIEND OF YOURS ANYMORE!
AAAH-- I'M SORRY-- SCOTCH AIN'T CALMIN' ME DOWN.
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT-- IT'S JUST *BUSINESS*.
I HAVE A MEETING TO ATTEND. STRAIGHTEN ALL THIS OUT.
AND LEAVE ME ALONE?
HERE. GO OUT, HAVE SOME FUN.
I'LL BE BACK AROUND TWO.
WAIT-- WHERE--?
76
K-KLUM
PALANTINE

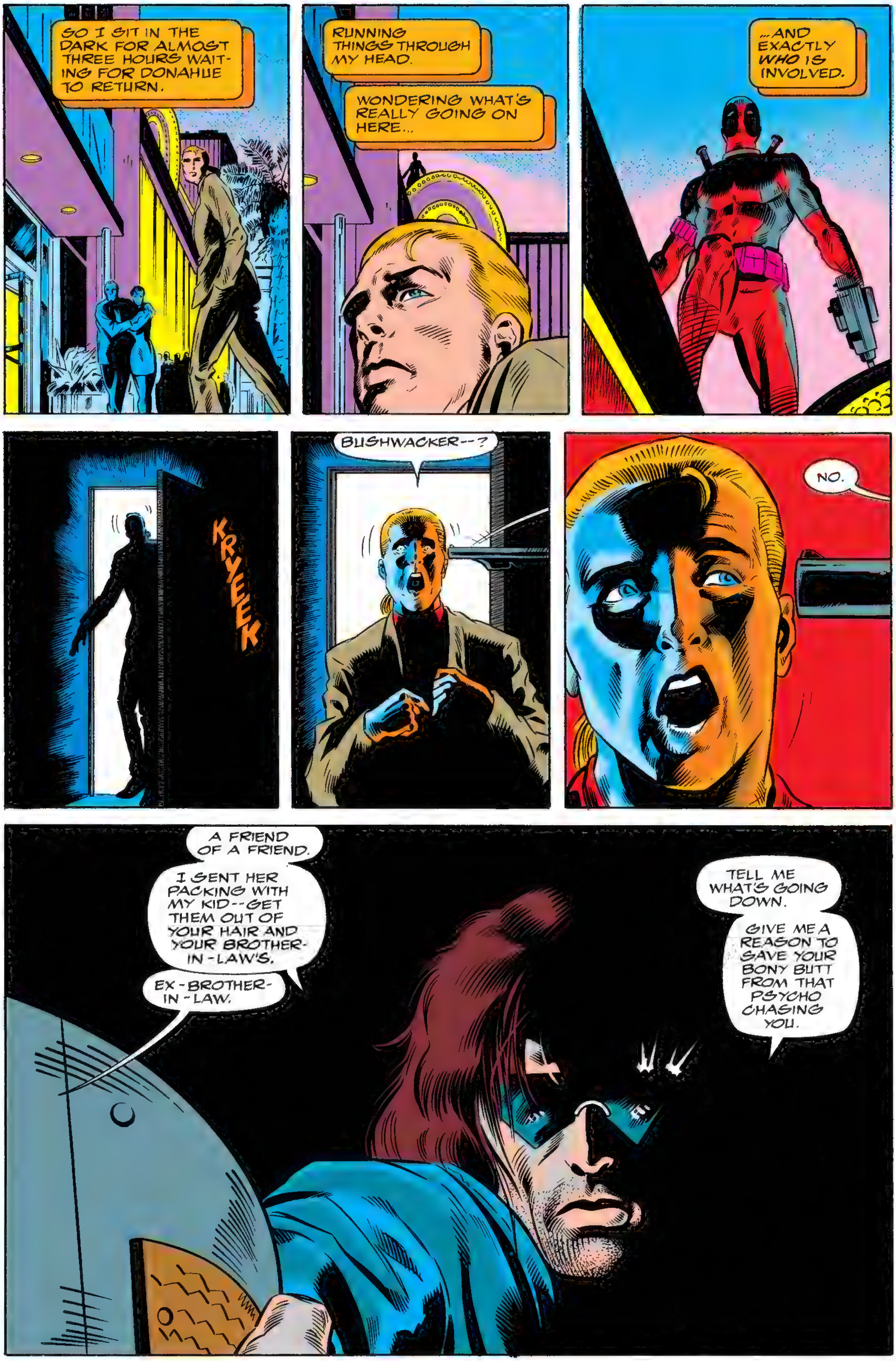

DONAHUE. REPRESENTING THE WEST COAST OPERATIONS FOR *LOTUS*.
YOU'RE LATE.
I LIKE TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE.
SO MAKE IT.
AH, MR. DONAHUE. SO NICE OF YOU TO JOIN US.
FROM WHAT I KNOW OF YOUR EMPLOYER, LOTUS, SHE PREFERS HER PEOPLE TO BE *PUNCTUAL*.
YEAH-- ER-- YOU'RE RIGHT.
RAN INTO SOME PROBLEMS GETTING HERE.
WE'RE COOL NOW.

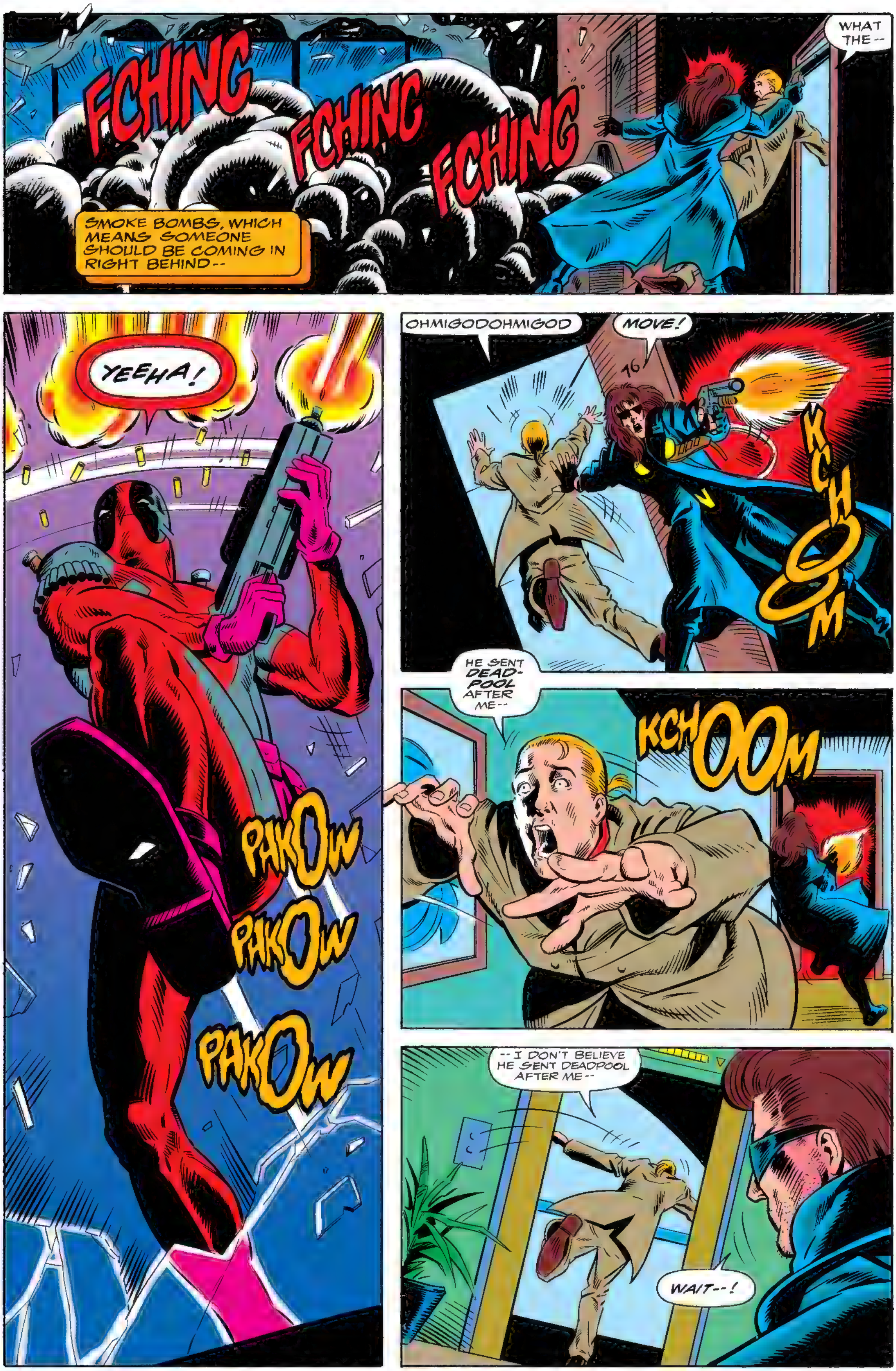

LET US BEGIN THEN.
YOU MAY KNOW, WE ARE HERE TO *DIVIDE* AND *ALLOCATE* THE RESOURCES LEFT BY THE *KINGPIN'S* RECENT *DOWNFALL*.
WE HOPE TO DO THIS *PROFESSIONALLY*, WITHOUT BLOODSHED.
LADY -- WHO THE @#$% ARE YOU T'BE RUNNIN' THIS SHOW?!
YOU MAY SIMPLY CALL ME THE *WORD*, MR. HAMMERHEAD.
AND I REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF *JOHANN SCHMIDT*.
THAT'S-- YOU WORK FER-- OH...
IF EVERYONE IS COMFORTABLE, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU ALL...
ANDREAS STRUCKER, REPRESENTING *FENRIS*.
WERNER VON STRUCKER, OF THE NEW *HYDRA*.
JUSTIN HAMMER, CORPORATE ENTREPRENEUR
MR. TOLLIVER, OF THE EUROPEAN CARTEL.
JONIN, OF THE *HAND*.
TOMBSTONE, OF THE *MAGGIA*.
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE *SECRET EMPIRE*.
MASTER *TATSU'O*, OF THE *YAKUZA*.
MIAMI BASED CAPO, THE *SLUG*.
AND *HAMMERHEAD*, A NEW YORK SPLINTER OF THE MAGGIA.

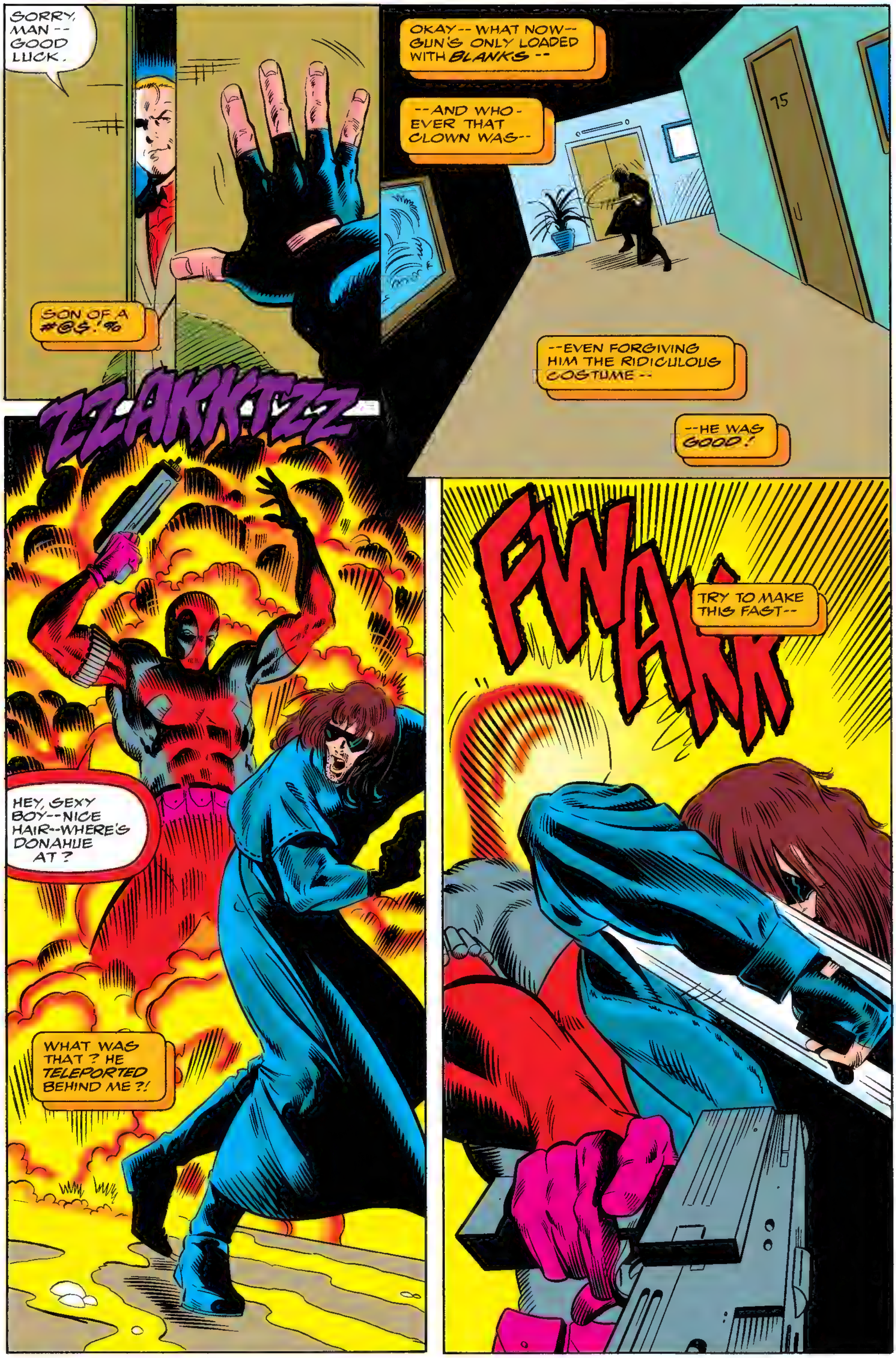

IF YOU ALL LOOK AT THE BRIEFS BEING HANDED TO YOU NOW...
...YOU WILL SEE THAT MY EMPLOYER HAS ATTEMPTED TO SUB-DIVIDE ALL PROCEEDS IN AN EQUITABLE MANNER--
--BASED ON INFLUENCE, EXPERIENCE, ASSETS AND--
EXCUSE ME, WHY IS THE **RED SKULL** NOT HERE HIMSELF?
HE IS HERE IN ALL WAYS THAT MATTER, MR. HAMMER.
AND WHAT IF WE DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT'S BEEN DIVVIED UP FER US, 'AY?
HOW'ZABOUT I JUST *TAKE* WHAT I WANT?
MR. HAMMERHEAD... WE ARE TRYING TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN A *CIVILIZED* MANNER.
THAT WILL *NOT* BE ACCOMPLISHED SO LONG AS I SHARE THIS TABLE WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS *STOLEN* FROM ME.
OH, TOLLIVER-- THERE YOU GO *AGAIN!*
THAT STUPID DEAL WENT SOUR! LOTUS LOST AS MUCH AS YOU DID! IT WAS A *YEAR AGO*-- *LET IT GO!*
INDEED--LET US ALL PUT ASIDE ANIMOSITIES OF THE PAST.
IF YOU TURN IN YOUR PROSPECTUS TO PAGE SIX, YOU WILL SEE THE CHART ON SCREEN...

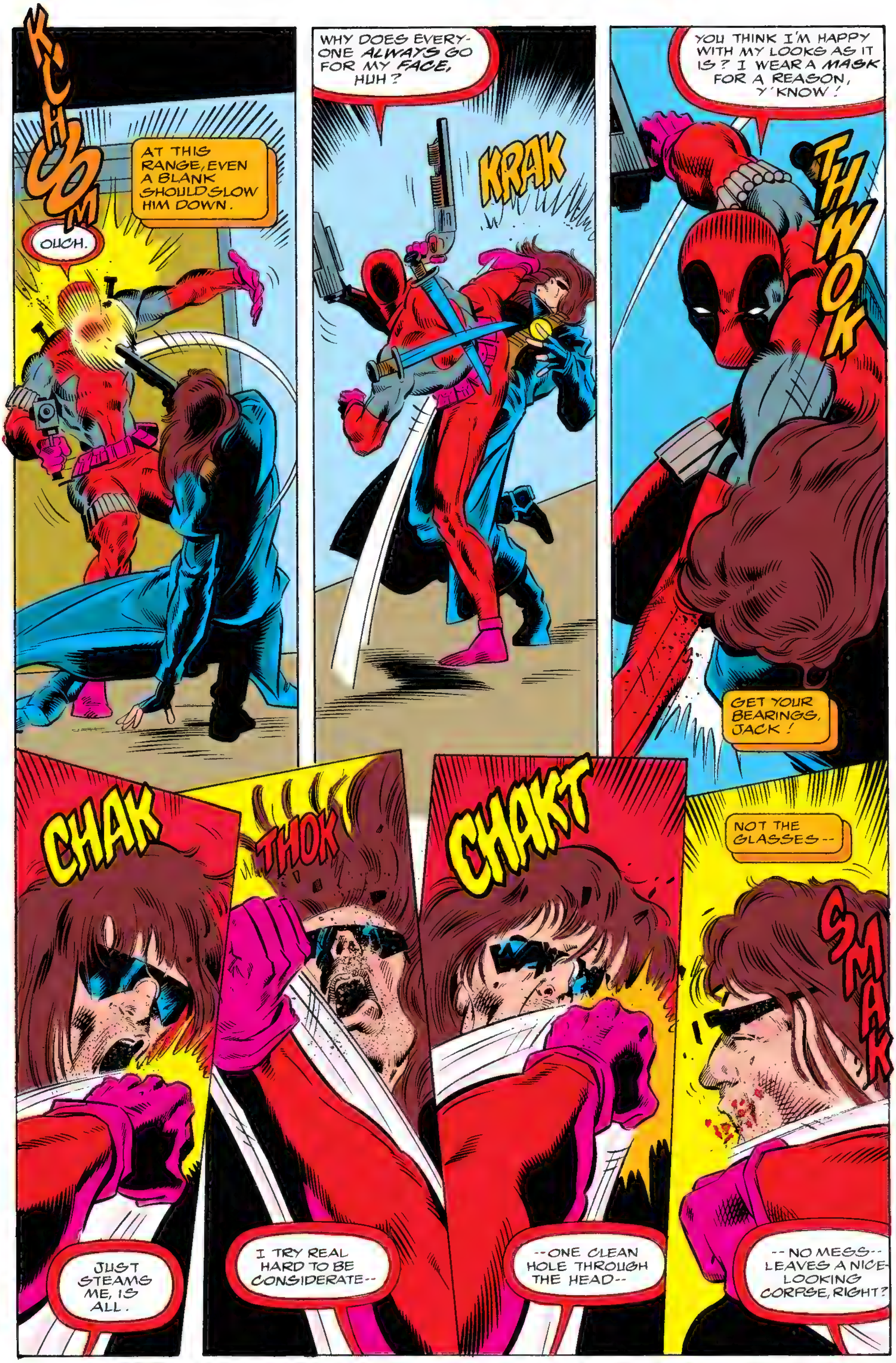

I WATCHED THAT DONAHUE DUDE LEAVE AN HOUR AGO.
HILSON
HILSON
NO MOVEMENT IN OR OUT FROM ANYONE I RECOGNIZE.
SO IT'S TIME TO GET THINGS GOING.
76
NOK NOK
WHO--
GET YOUR BAGS PACKED. YOU AND BUCKY ARE OUT OF HERE.
BUCKY-FEGSHOO-BABEEE!
DON'T WASTE ANY TIME, LEGS.
THIS PLACE IS TROUBLE.
IT'S ALL STARTING TO ADD UP.
YOUR TRICK WORKS FOR LOTUS. SHE'S ORGANIZED CRIME.
THE GOVERNMENT WANTS ME TO PUT SOME SALT ON THE SLUG.
AND A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, I RAN INTO SOMEONE WHO HAD AN UNHEALTHY CURIOSITY ABOUT WEST COAST SHIPPING ACTIVITY.
MOUNTA DEW

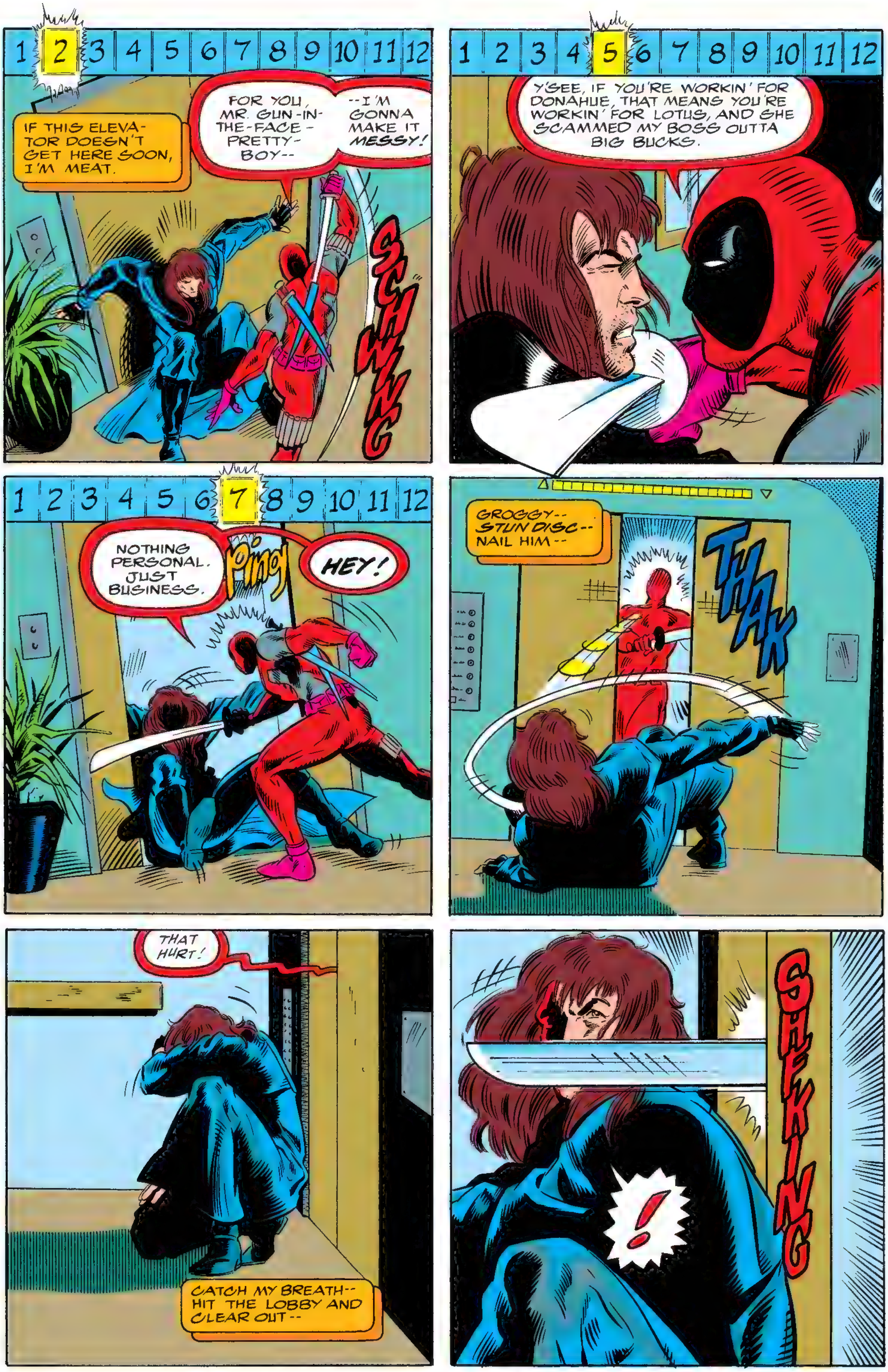

SOMETHING *BIG* IS GOING DOWN IN VEGAS.
THE *UNDERGROUNDERS* WANT YOU OUT. I WANT YOU TO TAKE BUCKY.
WHAT ABOUT *YOU*?
I'M GOING TO WAIT RIGHT HERE UNTIL YOUR BOYFRIEND COMES BACK.
THEN I'M GOING TO ASK HIM SOME QUESTIONS...
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY...
Odessa MOTEL
VACANCY
17
Odessa MOTEL
EH--?
HUMPH.
VRRUUMMM

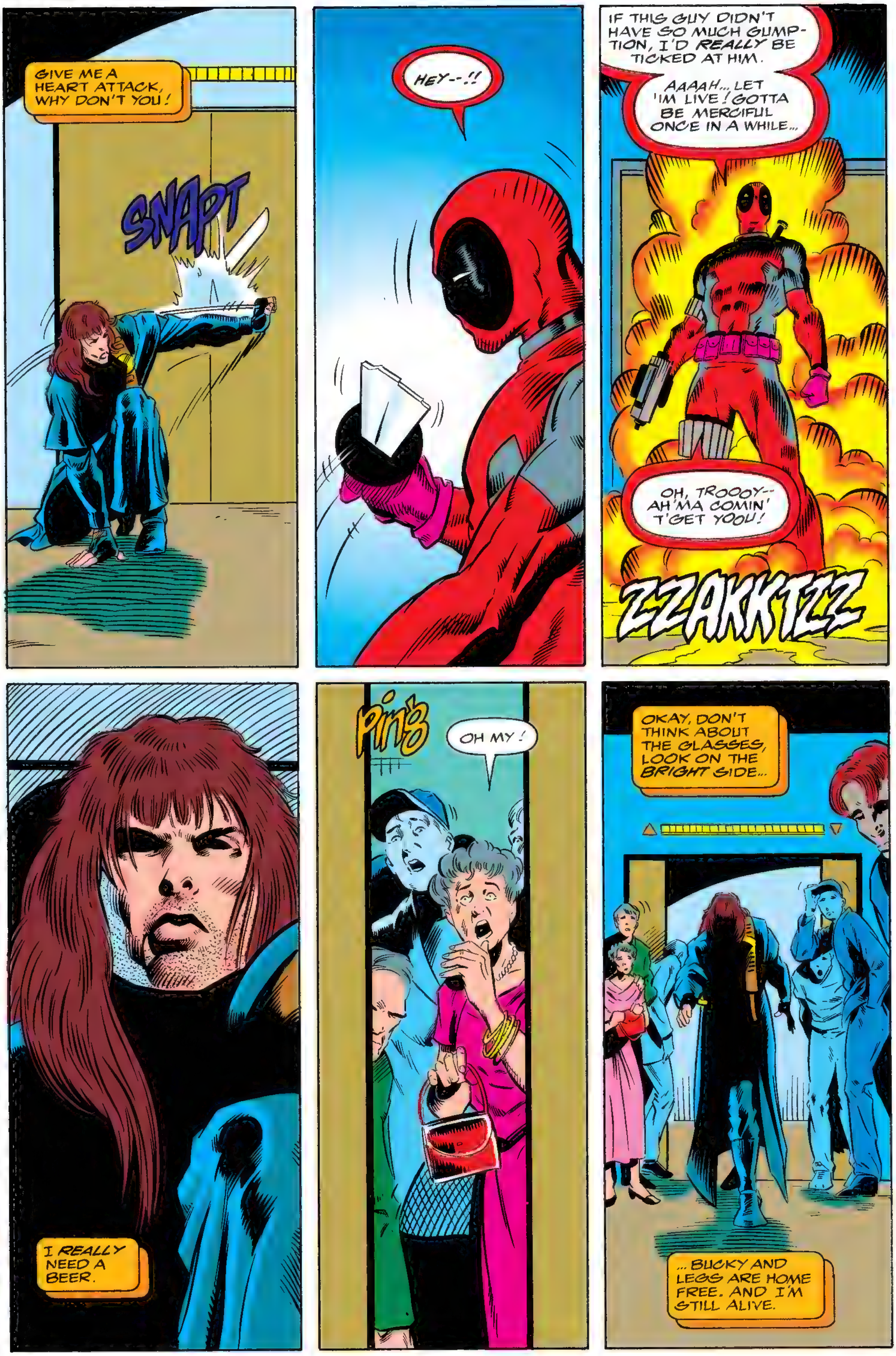

SO I SIT IN THE DARK FOR ALMOST THREE HOURS WAITING FOR DONAHUE TO RETURN.
RUNNING THINGS THROUGH MY HEAD.
WONDERING WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE...
...AND EXACTLY *WHO* IS INVOLVED.
KRYEEK
BUSHWACKER--?
NO.
A FRIEND OF A FRIEND.
I SENT HER PACKING WITH MY KID--GET THEM OUT OF YOUR HAIR AND YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW'S.
EX-BROTHER-IN-LAW.
TELL ME WHAT'S GOING DOWN.
GIVE ME A REASON TO SAVE YOUR BONY BUTT FROM THAT PSYCHO CHASING YOU.

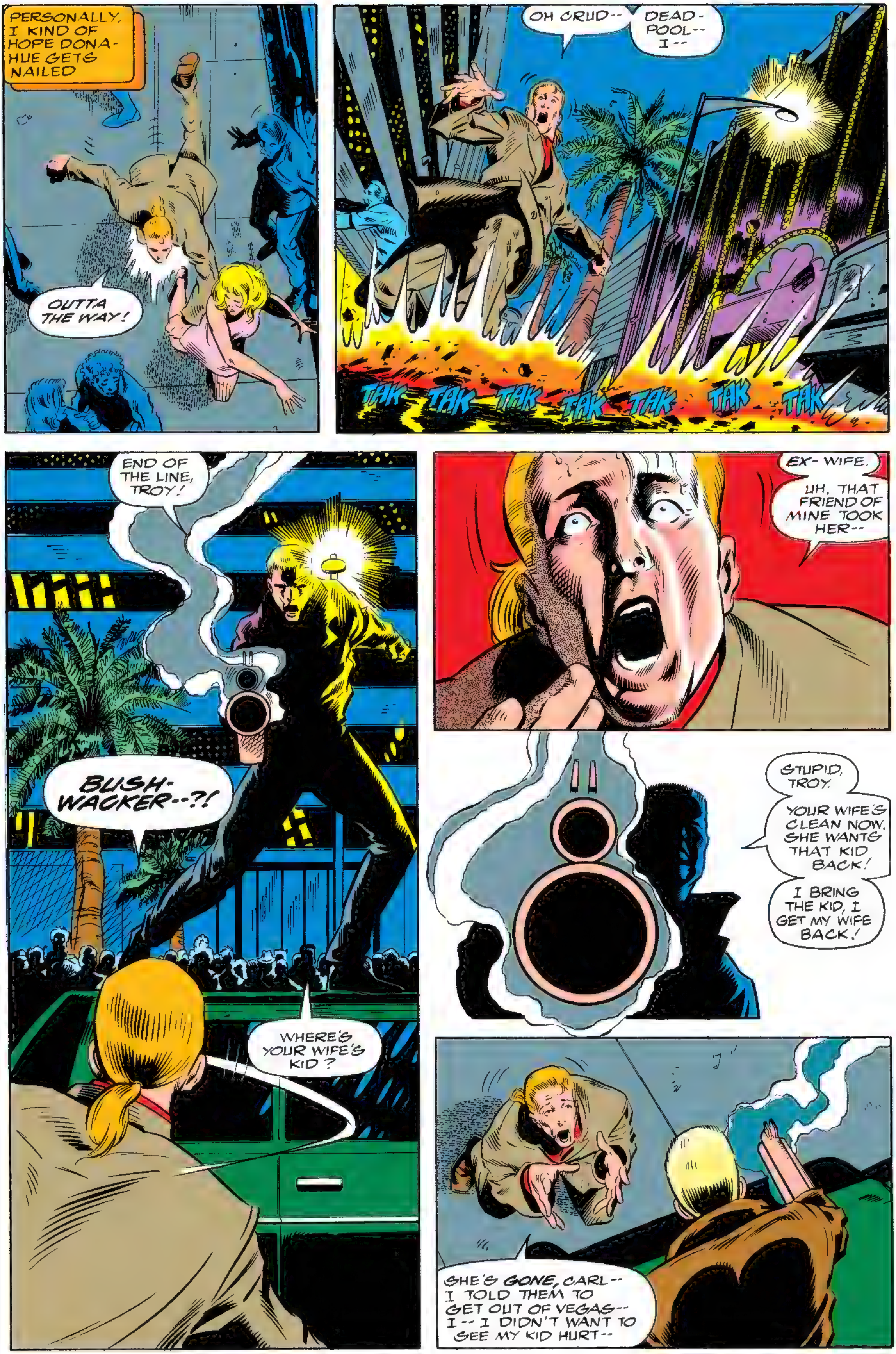

FCHING
FCHING
FCHING
WHAT THE--
SMOKE BOMBS, WHICH MEANS SOMEONE SHOULD BE COMING IN RIGHT BEHIND--
YEEHA!
PAKOW
PAKOW
PAKOW
OHMIGODOHMIGOD
MOVE!
76
KCHOOOM
HE SENT DEADPOOL AFTER ME--
KCHOOOM
--I DON'T BELIEVE HE SENT DEADPOOL AFTER ME--
WAIT--!

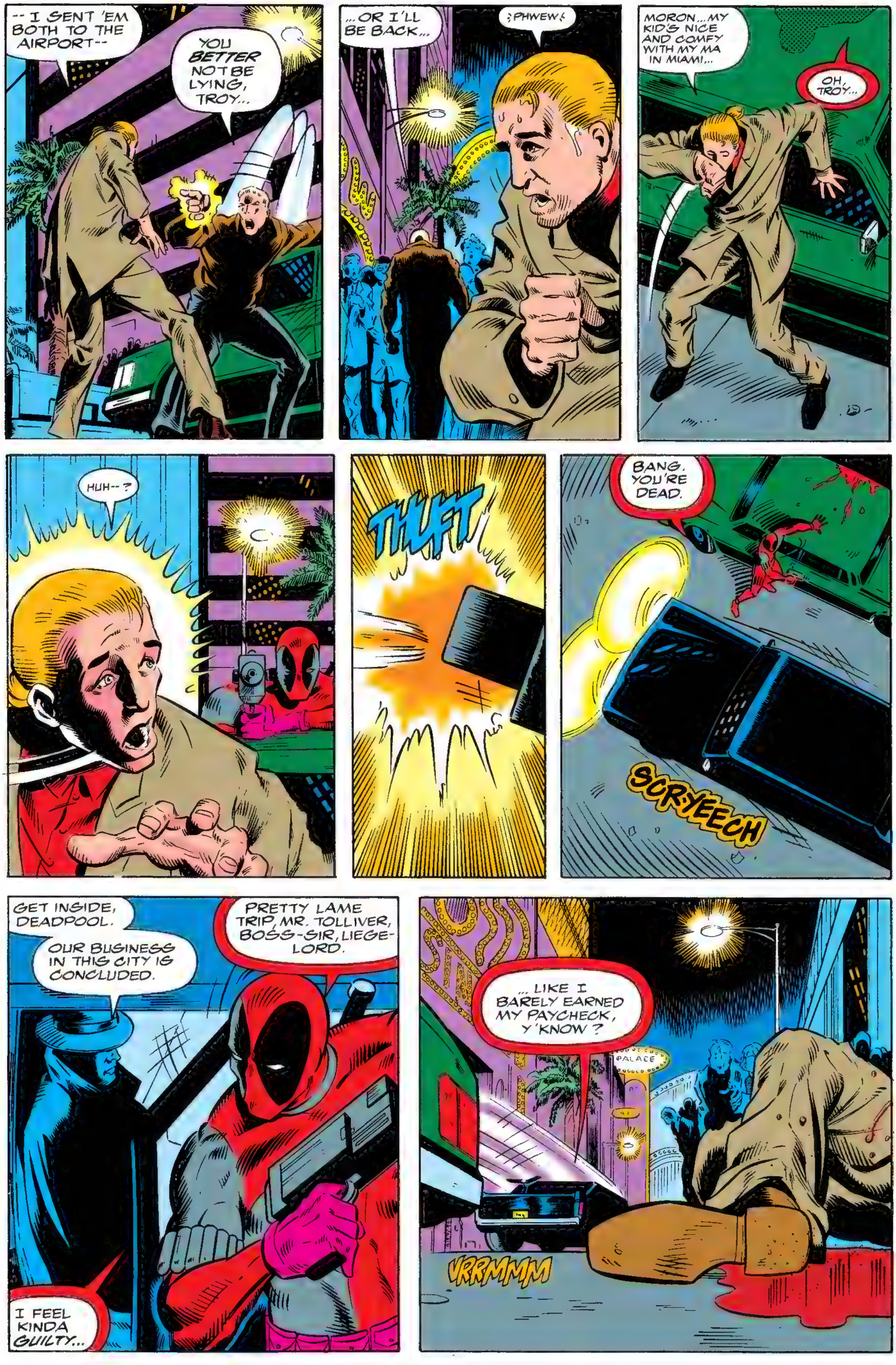

SORRY, MAN -- GOOD LUCK.
SON OF A #@$!%
OKAY-- WHAT NOW-- GUN'S ONLY LOADED WITH *BLANKS* --
--AND WHO-EVER THAT CLOWN WAS--
75
--EVEN FORGIVING HIM THE RIDICULOUS COSTUME--
--HE WAS *GOOD!*
ZZAKKTZZ
HEY, SEXY BOY--NICE HAIR--WHERE'S DONAHUE AT?
WHAT WAS THAT? HE *TELEPORTED* BEHIND ME?!
FWAKK
TRY TO MAKE THIS FAST--

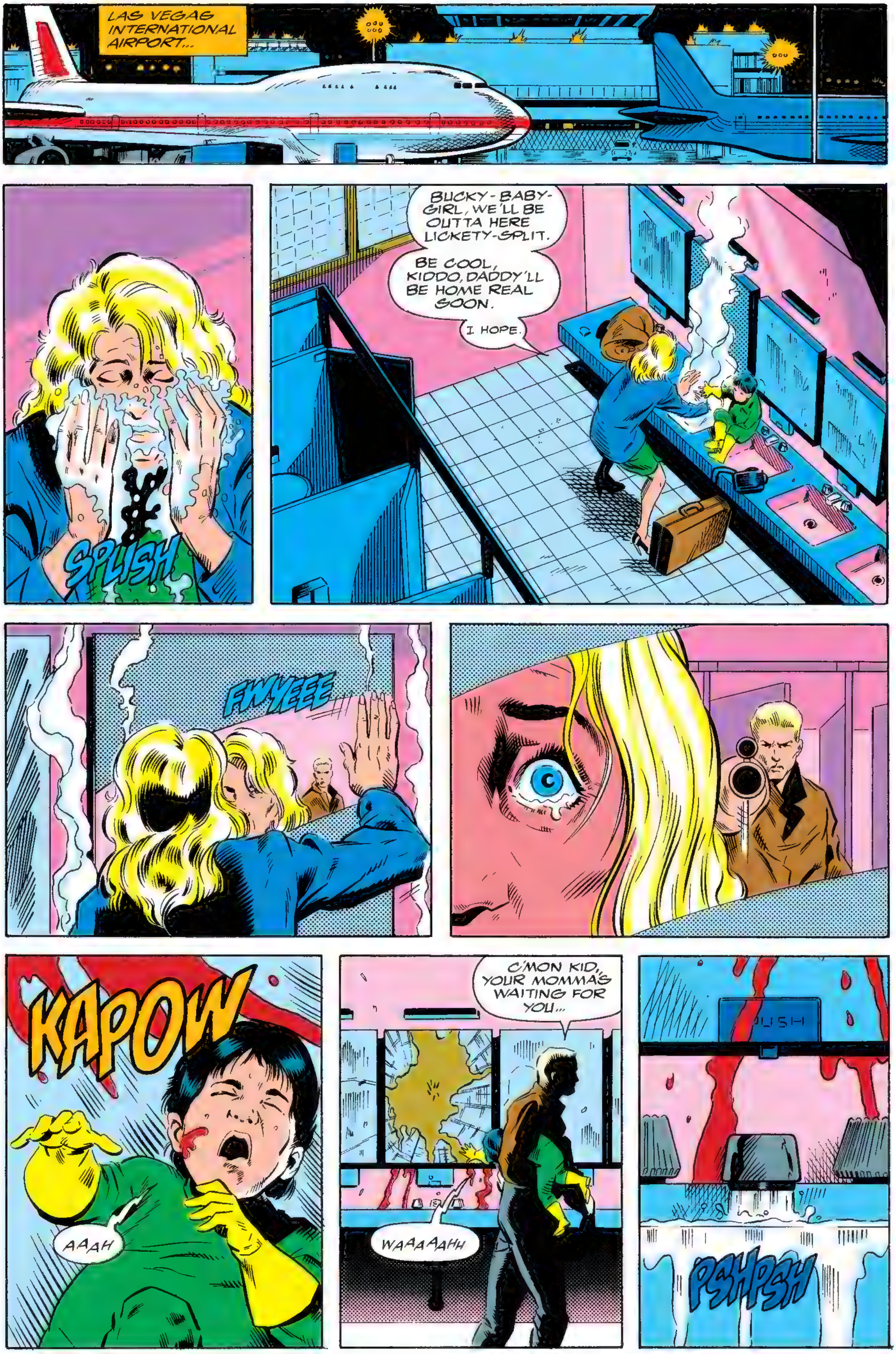

KCHOOM
AT THIS RANGE, EVEN A BLANK SHOULD SLOW HIM DOWN.
OUCH.
WHY DOES EVERYONE *ALWAYS* GO FOR MY *FACE*, HUH?
KRAK
YOU THINK I'M HAPPY WITH MY LOOKS AS IT IS? I WEAR A *MASK* FOR A REASON, Y'KNOW!
THWOK
GET YOUR BEARINGS, JACK!
CHAK
JUST STEAMS ME, IS ALL.
THOK
I TRY REAL HARD TO BE CONSIDERATE--
CHAKT
--ONE CLEAN HOLE THROUGH THE HEAD--
NOT THE GLASSES--
SMAK
--NO MESS--LEAVES A NICE-LOOKING CORPSE, RIGHT?

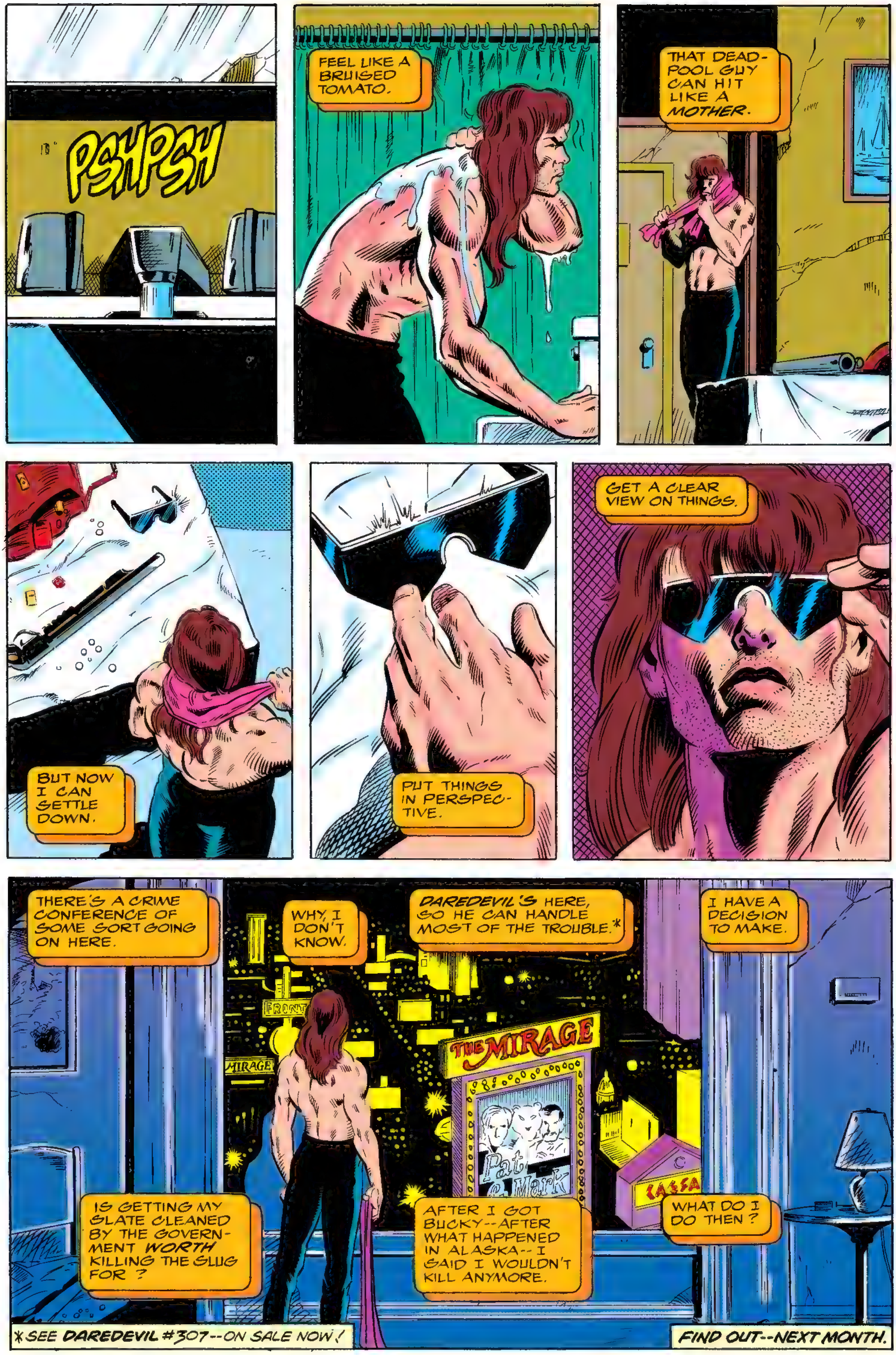

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
IF THIS ELEVATOR DOESN'T GET HERE SOON, I'M MEAT.
FOR YOU, MR. GUN-IN-THE-FACE-PRETTY-BOY--
--I'M GONNA MAKE IT MESSY!
SCHWING
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Y'SEE, IF YOU'RE WORKIN' FOR DONAHUE, THAT MEANS YOU'RE WORKIN' FOR LOTUS, AND SHE SCAMMED MY BOSS OUTTA BIG BUCKS.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
NOTHING PERSONAL. JUST BUSINESS.
Ping
HEY!
GROGGY-- STUN DISC-- NAIL HIM--
THAK
THAT HURT!
CATCH MY BREATH-- HIT THE LOBBY AND CLEAR OUT--
SHKKING
!

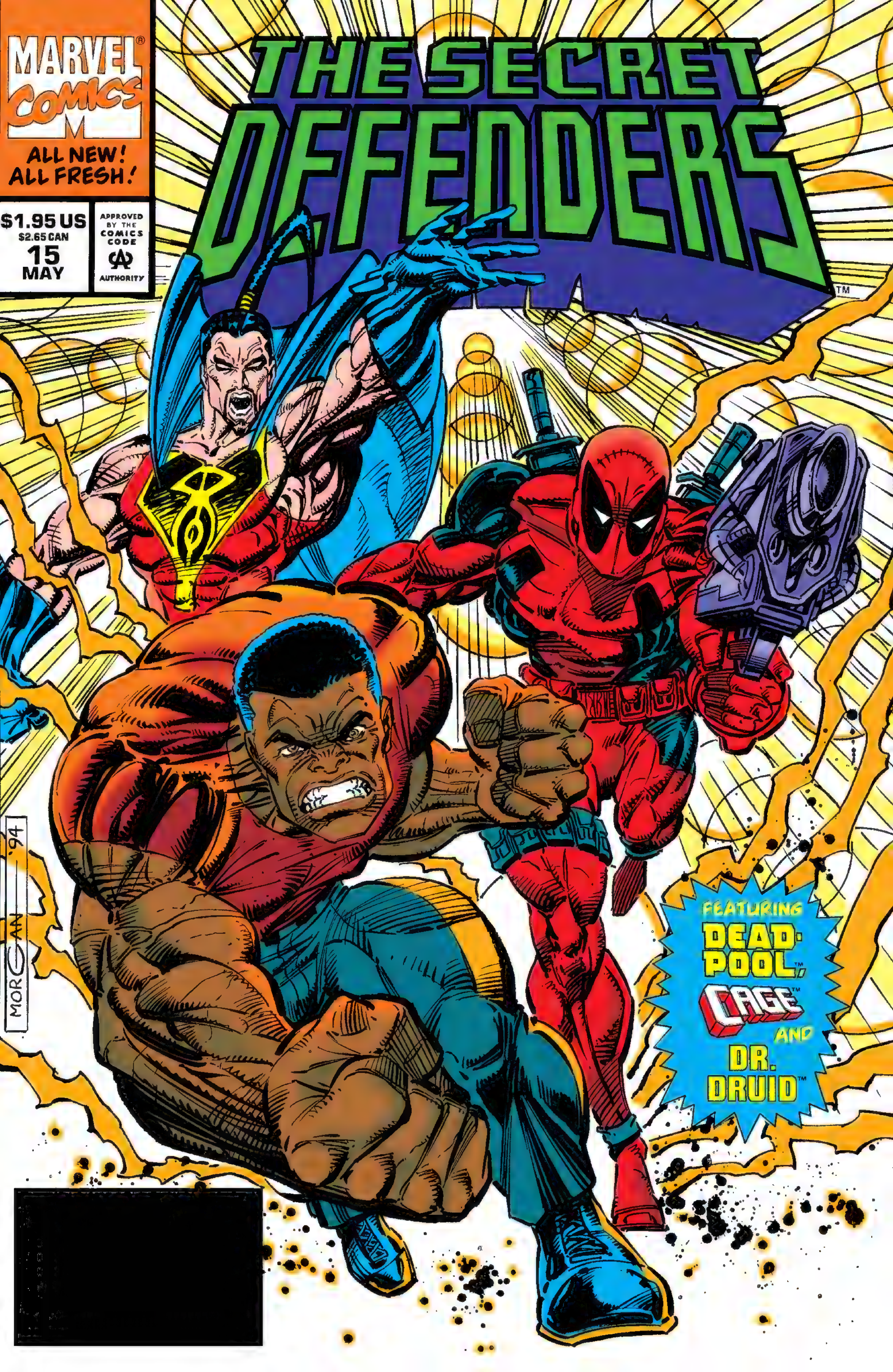

GIVE ME A HEART ATTACK, WHY DON'T YOU!
SNAPT
HEY--!!
IF THIS GUY DIDN'T HAVE SO MUCH GUMPTION, I'D *REALLY* BE TICKED AT HIM.
AAAAH... LET 'IM LIVE! GOTTA BE MERCIFUL ONCE IN A WHILE...
OH, TROOOY-- AH'MA COMIN' T'GET YOOU!
ZZAKKTZZ
I *REALLY* NEED A BEER.
ping
OH MY!
OKAY, DON'T THINK ABOUT THE GLASSES, LOOK ON THE *BRIGHT* SIDE...
...BUCKY AND LEGS ARE HOME FREE. AND I'M STILL ALIVE.


PERSONALLY, I KIND OF HOPE DONAHUE GETS NAILED
OUTTA THE WAY!
OH CRUD--
DEAD-POOL-- I--
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK
END OF THE LINE, TROY!
BUSH-WACKER--?!
WHERE'S YOUR WIFE'S KID?
EX-WIFE.
UH, THAT FRIEND OF MINE TOOK HER--
STUPID, TROY.
YOUR WIFE'S CLEAN NOW. SHE WANTS THAT KID BACK!
I BRING THE KID, I GET MY WIFE BACK!
SHE'S *GONE*, CARL-- I TOLD THEM TO GET OUT OF VEGAS-- I-- I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE MY KID HURT--


-- I SENT 'EM BOTH TO THE AIRPORT--
YOU BETTER NOT BE LYING, TROY...
...OR I'LL BE BACK...
PHWEW
MORON... MY KID'S NICE AND COMFY WITH MY MA IN MIAMI...
OH, TROY...
HUH-- ?
THUFT
BANG. YOU'RE DEAD.
SCR-YEECH
GET INSIDE, DEADPOOL.
OUR BUSINESS IN THIS CITY IS CONCLUDED.
PRETTY LAME TRIP, MR. TOLLIVER, BOSS-SIR, LIEGE-LORD.
I FEEL KINDA GUILTY...
... LIKE I BARELY EARNED MY PAYCHECK, Y'KNOW?
PALACE
VRRMMM


LAS VEGAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...
SPLISH
BUCKY-BABY-GIRL, WE'LL BE OUTTA HERE LICKETY-SPLIT.
BE COOL, KIDDO, DADDY'LL BE HOME REAL SOON.
I HOPE.
FWYEEE
KAPOW
AAAH
C'MON KID, YOUR MOMMA'S WAITING FOR YOU...
WAAAAAHH
LUSH
PSHPSH


PSHPSH
FEEL LIKE A BRUISED TOMATO.
THAT DEADPOOL GUY CAN HIT LIKE A MOTHER.
BUT NOW I CAN SETTLE DOWN.
PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.
GET A CLEAR VIEW ON THINGS.
THERE'S A CRIME CONFERENCE OF SOME SORT GOING ON HERE.
WHY, I DON'T KNOW.
DAREDEVIL'S HERE, SO HE CAN HANDLE MOST OF THE TROUBLE.*
I HAVE A DECISION TO MAKE.
FRONT
MIRAGE
THE MIRAGE
Pat & Mark
CASSA
IS GETTING MY SLATE CLEANED BY THE GOVERNMENT WORTH KILLING THE SLUG FOR ?
AFTER I GOT BUCKY--AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN ALASKA--I SAID I WOULDN'T KILL ANYMORE.
WHAT DO I DO THEN ?
*SEE DAREDEVIL #307--ON SALE NOW!
FIND OUT--NEXT MONTH.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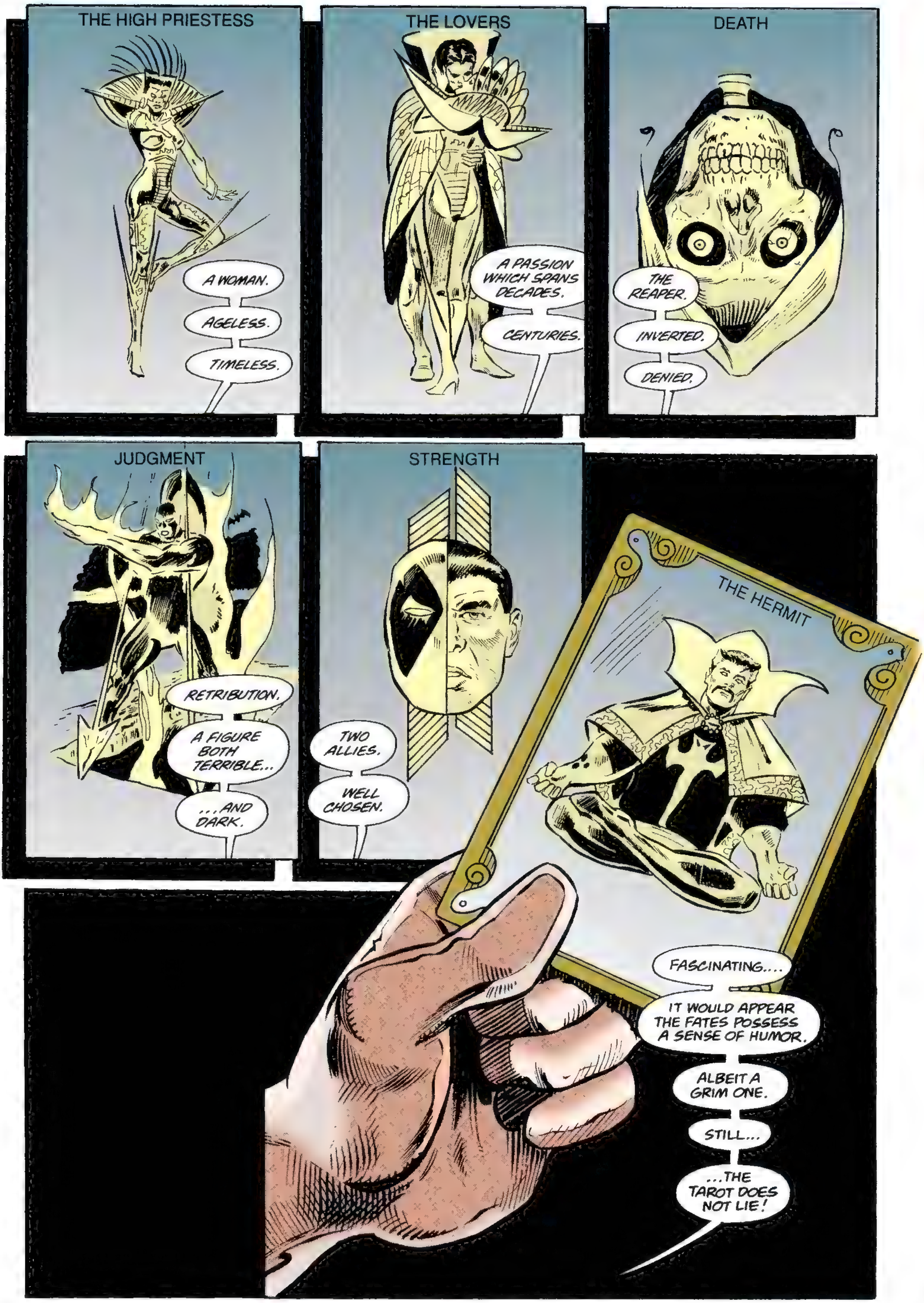
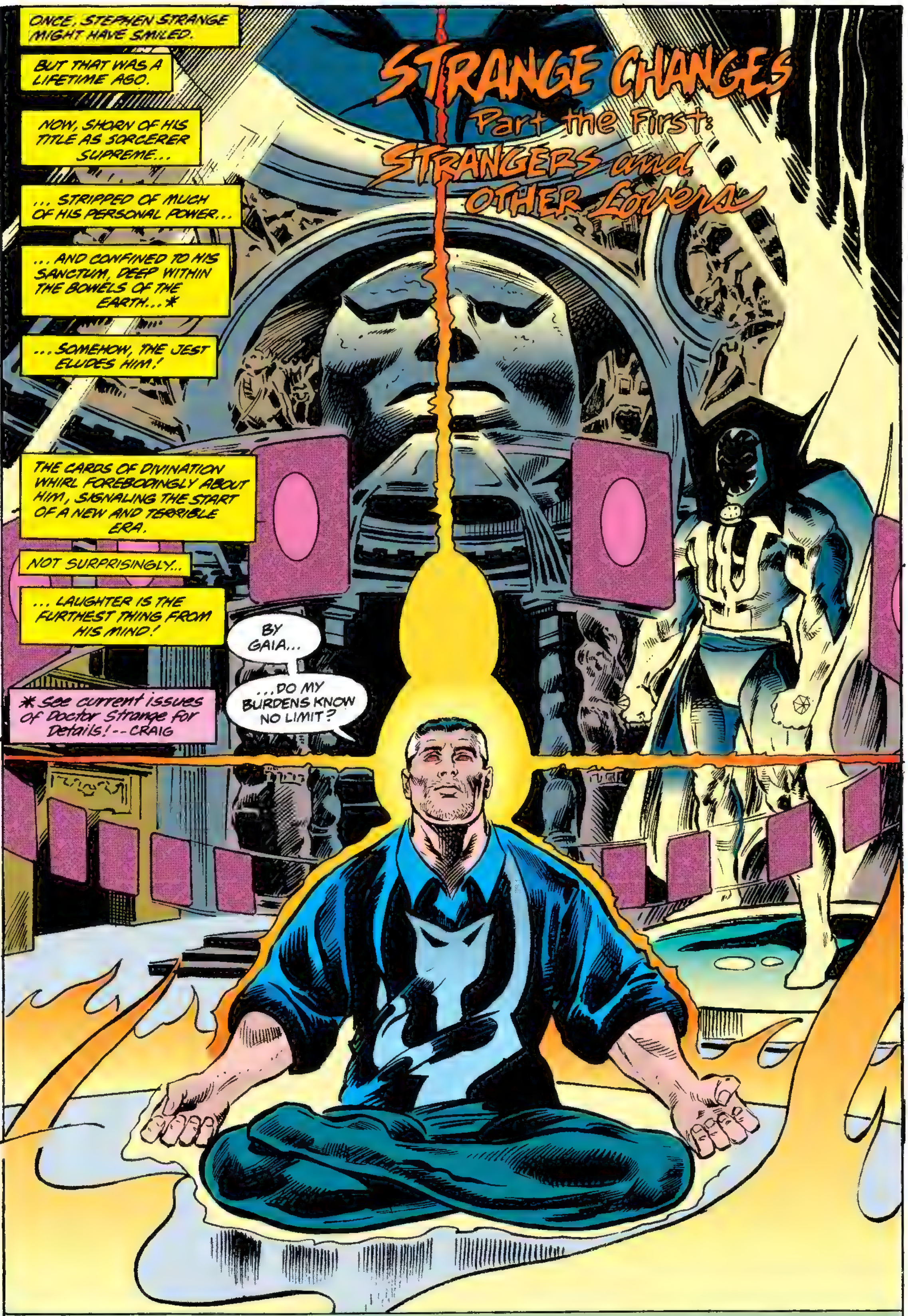
MORGAN '94
FEATURING DEAD-POOL,™ CAGE™ AND DR. DRUID™

[redacted]


THE HIGH PRIESTESS
A WOMAN.
AGELESS.
TIMELESS.
THE LOVERS
A PASSION WHICH SPANS DECADES.
CENTURIES.
DEATH
THE REAPER.
INVERTED.
DENIED.
JUDGMENT
RETRIBUTION.
A FIGURE BOTH TERRIBLE...
...AND DARK.
STRENGTH
TWO ALLIES.
WELL CHOSEN.
THE HERMIT
FASCINATING....
IT WOULD APPEAR THE FATES POSSESS A SENSE OF HUMOR.
ALBEIT A GRIM ONE.
STILL...
...THE TAROT DOES NOT LIE!


ONCE, STEPHEN STRANGE MIGHT HAVE SMILED.
BUT THAT WAS A LIFETIME AGO.
NOW, SHORN OF HIS TITLE AS SORCERER SUPREME...
... STRIPPED OF MUCH OF HIS PERSONAL POWER...
... AND CONFINED TO HIS SANCTUM, DEEP WITHIN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH...*
... SOMEHOW, THE JEST ELUDES HIM!
STRANGE CHANGES
Part the First: STRANGERS and OTHER Lovers
THE CARDS OF DIVINATION WHIRL FOREBODINGLY ABOUT HIM, SIGNALING THE START OF A NEW AND TERRIBLE ERA.
NOT SURPRISINGLY...
... LAUGHTER IS THE FURTHEST THING FROM HIS MIND!
BY GAIA...
... DO MY BURDENS KNOW NO LIMIT?
* See current issues of Doctor Strange for Details! --CRAIG

TOM BREVOORT & MIKE KANTEROVICH writers • JERRY DECAIRE penciler • TONY DEZUNIGA inker • JOHN COSTANZA letterer JOHN KALISZ colorist
CRAIG ANDERSON, editor • TOM DEFALCO, Mystic Harbinger in chief

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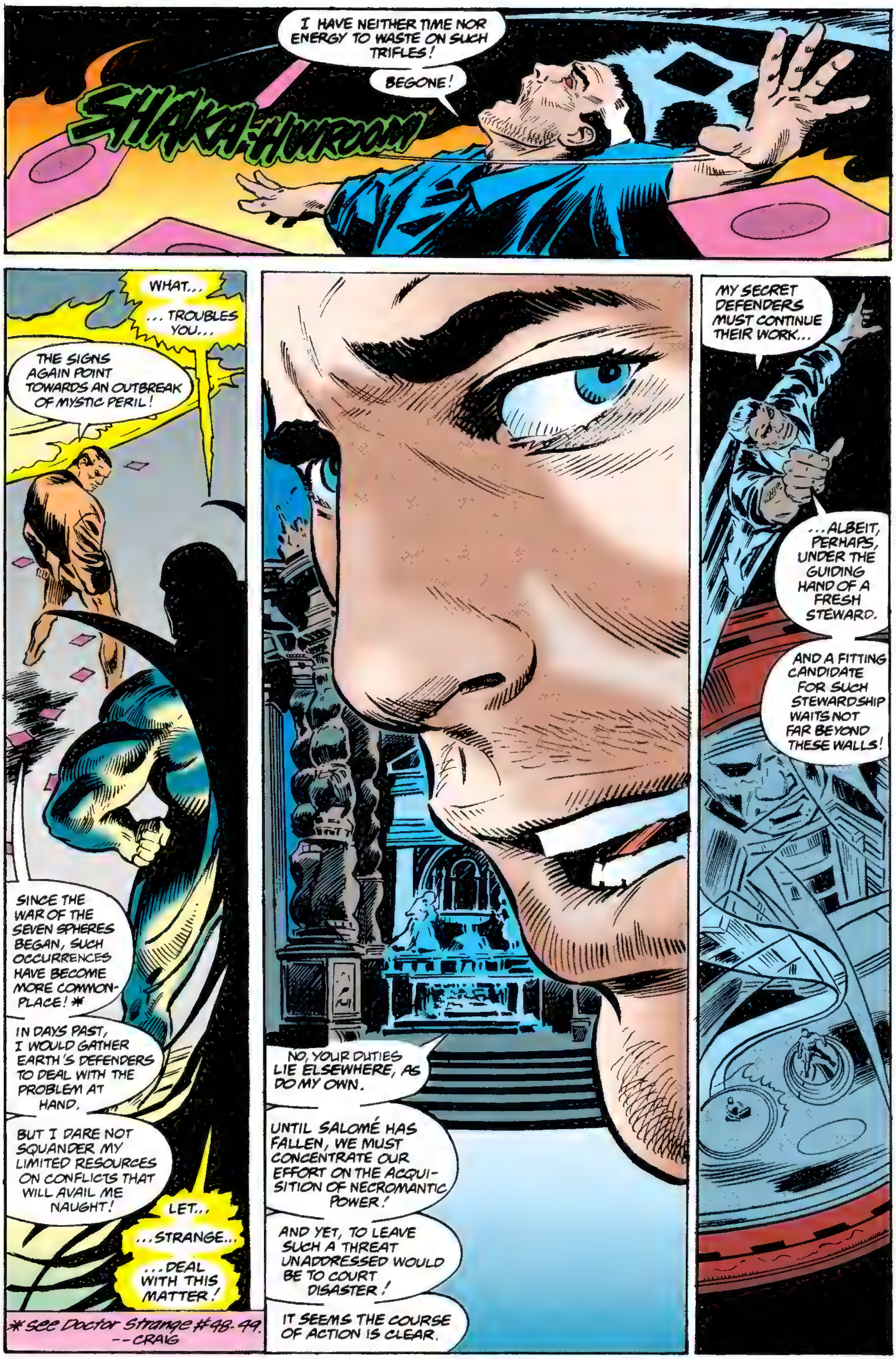
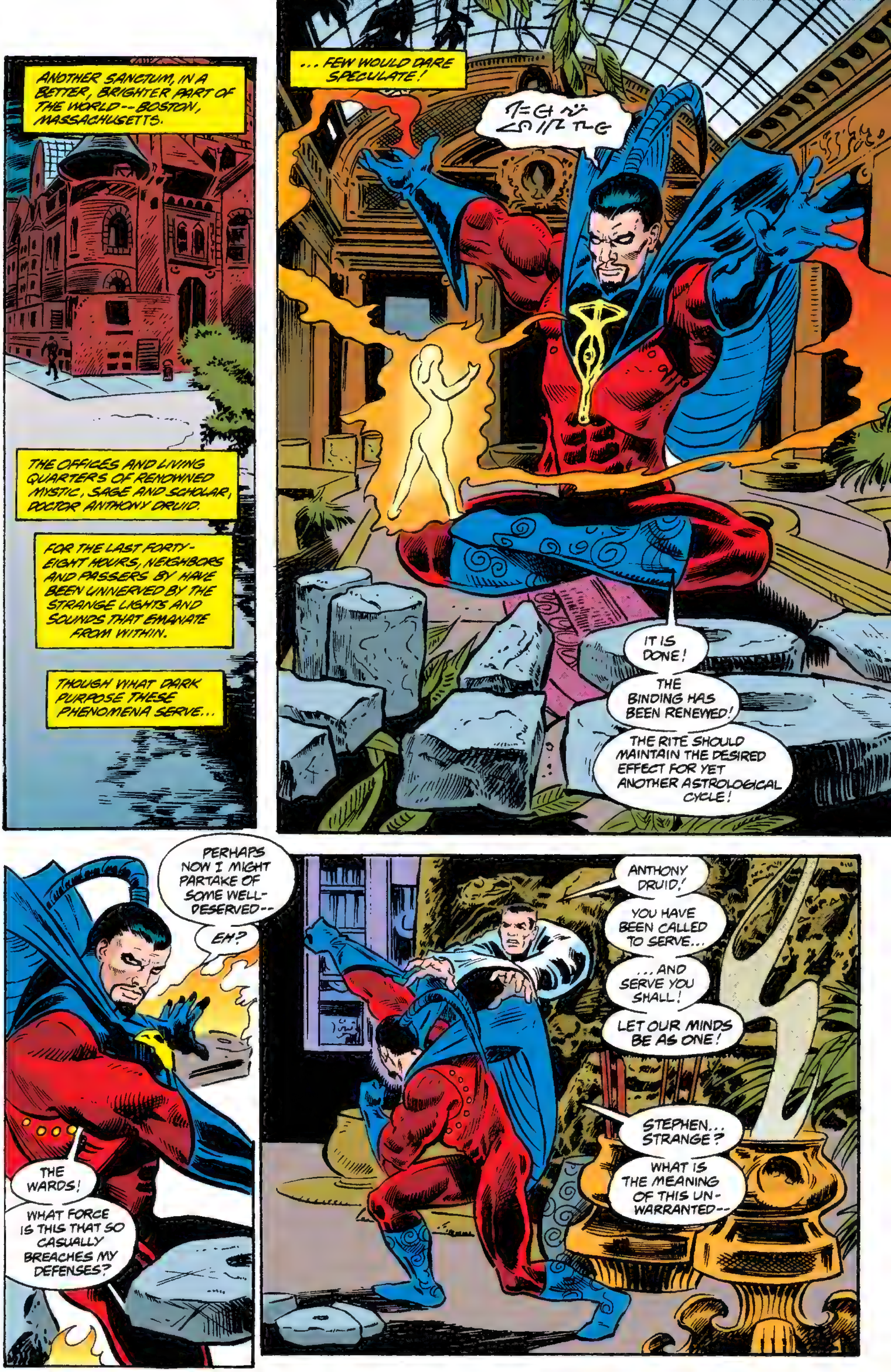
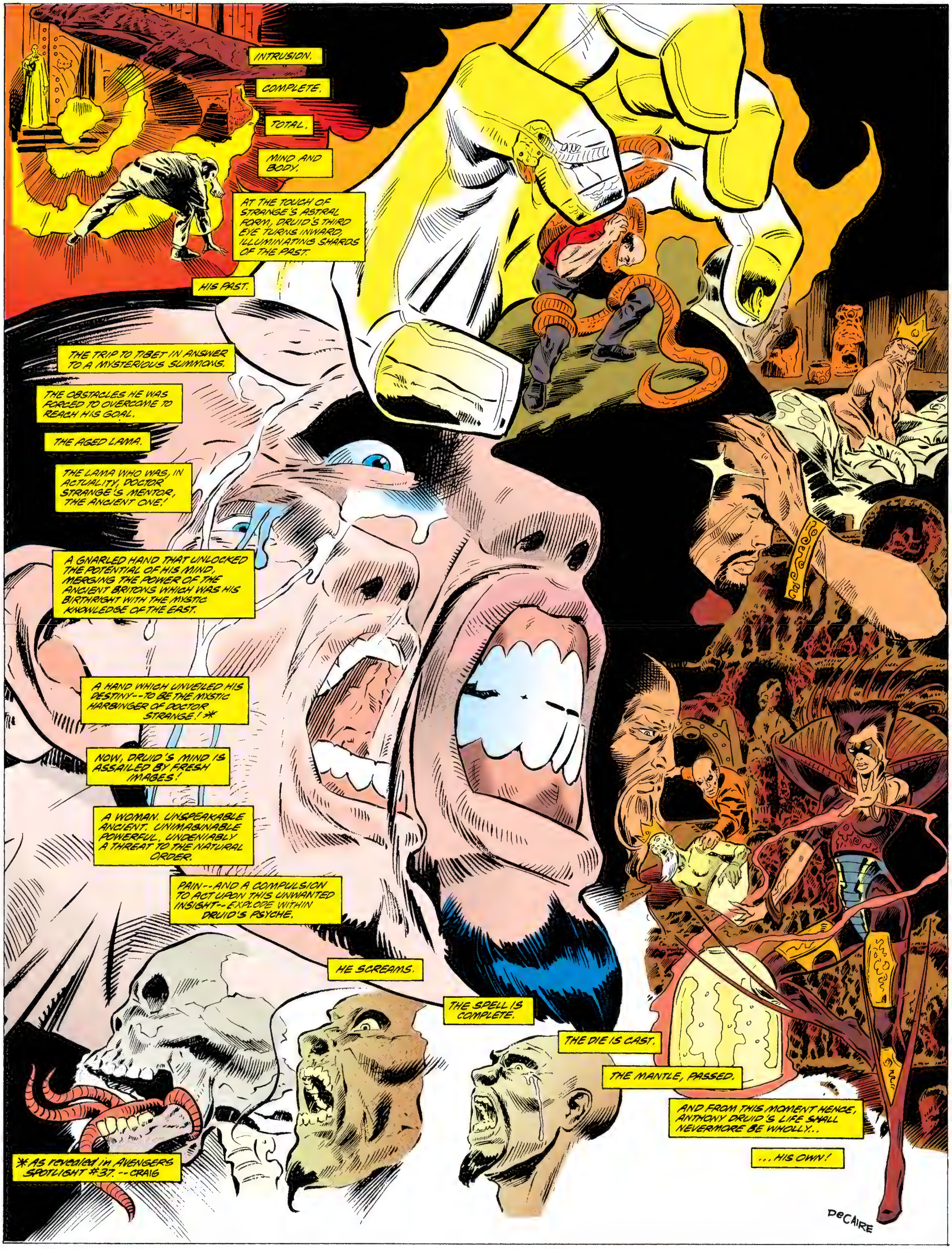
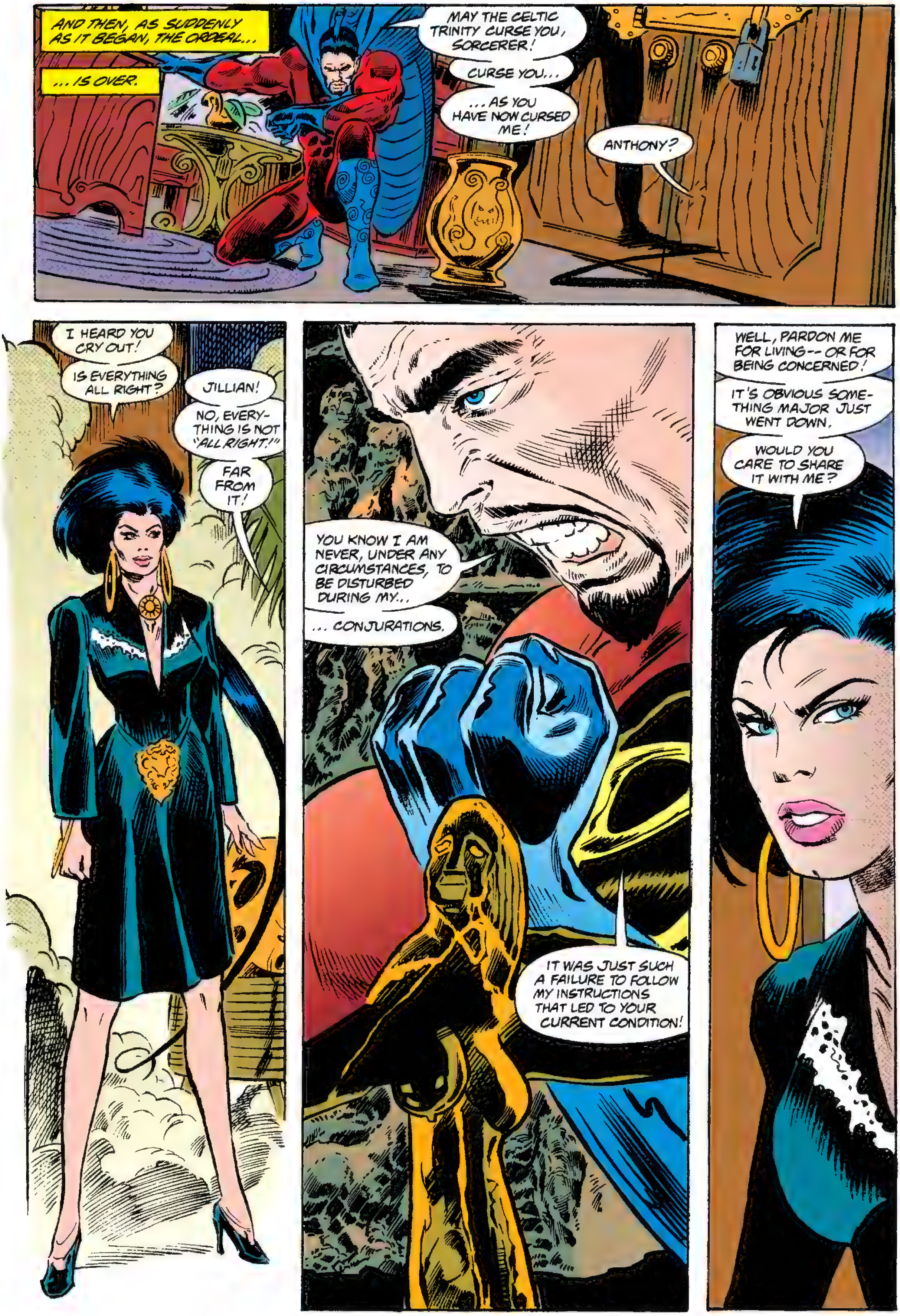
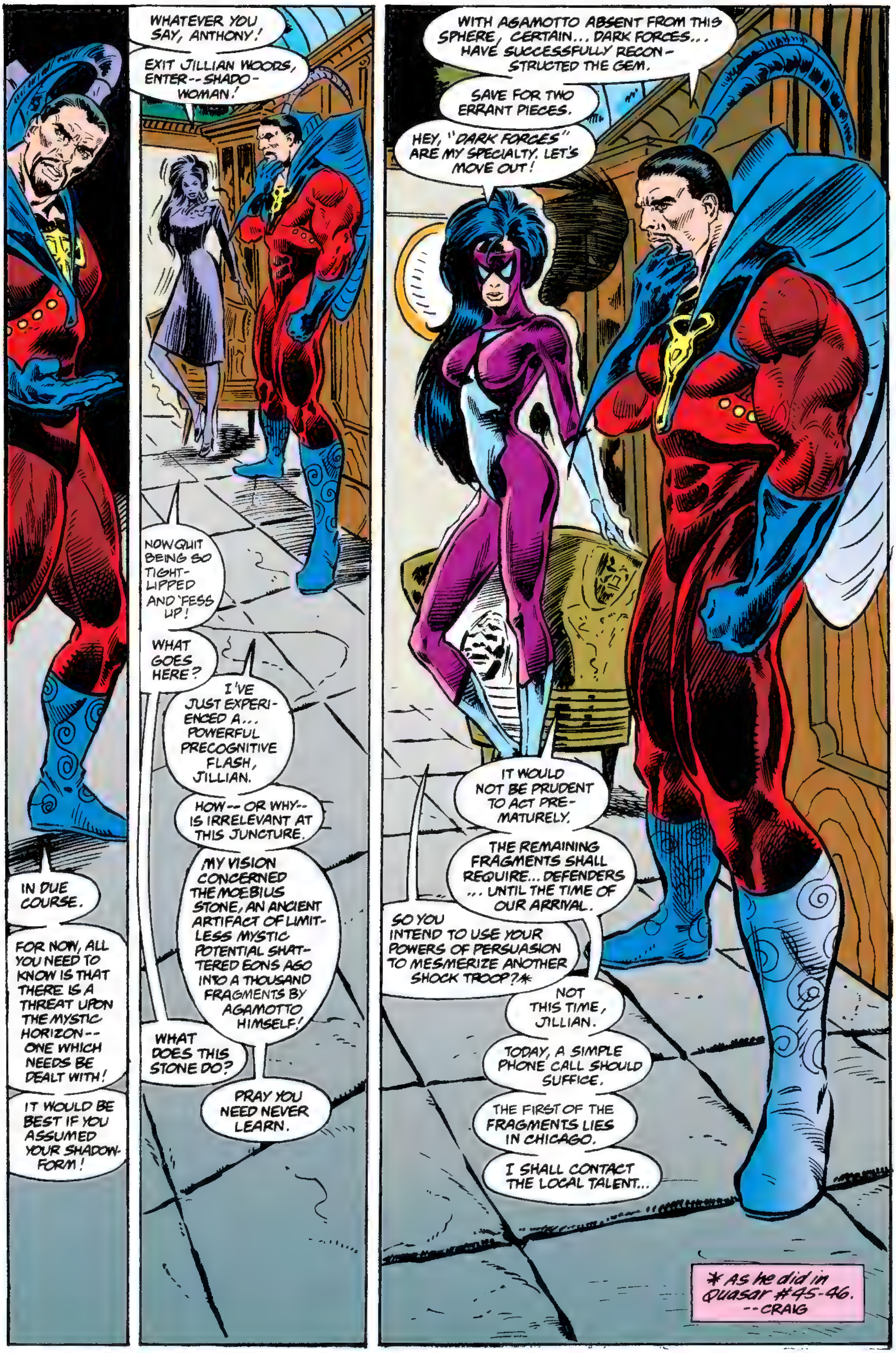
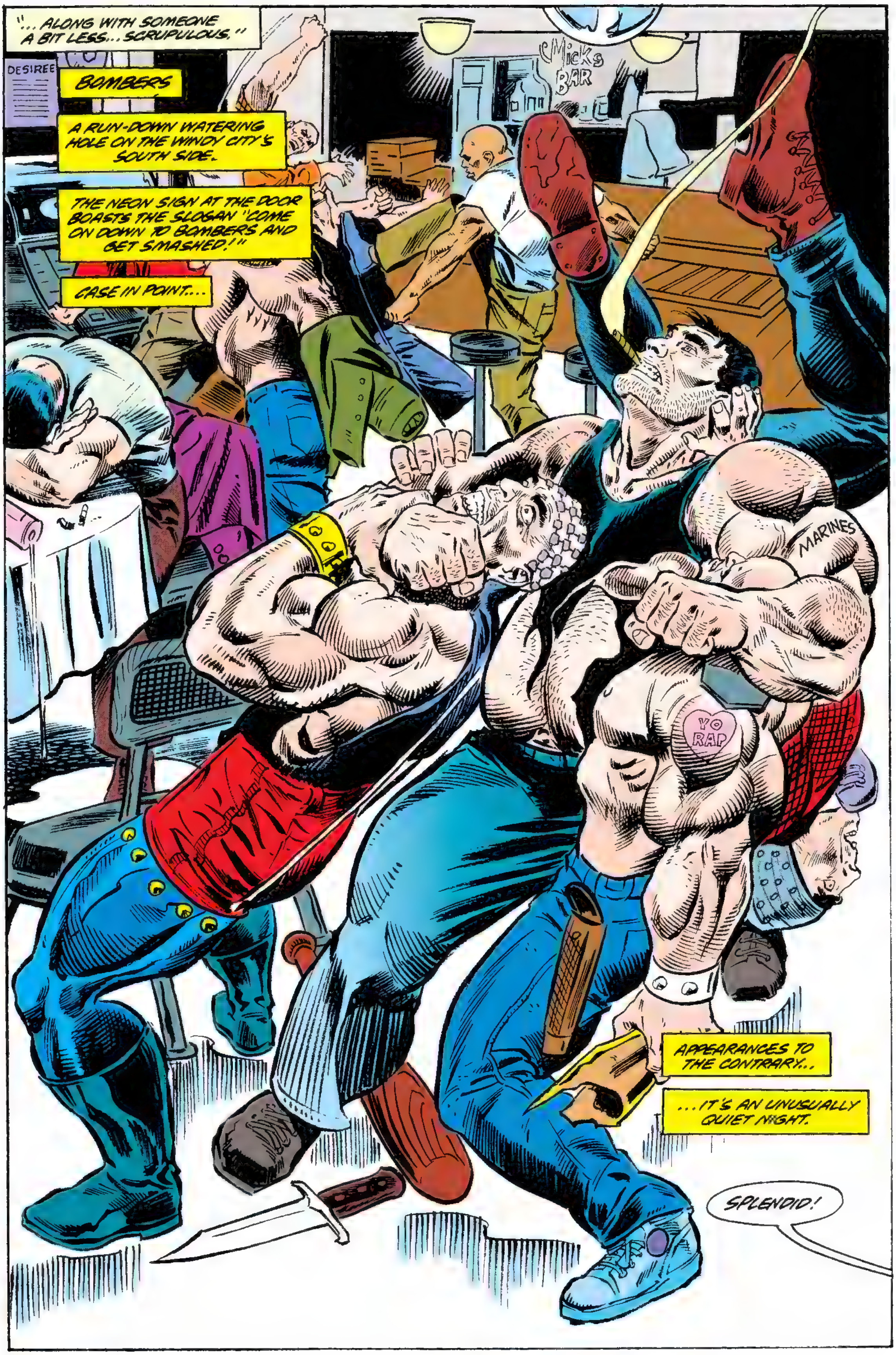

I HAVE NEITHER TIME NOR ENERGY TO WASTE ON SUCH TRIFLES!
BEGONE!
SHAKA-HWROOM
WHAT...
...TROUBLES YOU...
THE SIGNS AGAIN POINT TOWARDS AN OUTBREAK OF MYSTIC PERIL!
SINCE THE WAR OF THE SEVEN SPHERES BEGAN, SUCH OCCURRENCES HAVE BECOME MORE COMMONPLACE!*
IN DAYS PAST, I WOULD GATHER EARTH'S DEFENDERS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM AT HAND.
BUT I DARE NOT SQUANDER MY LIMITED RESOURCES ON CONFLICTS THAT WILL AVAIL ME NAUGHT!
LET...
...STRANGE...
...DEAL WITH THIS MATTER!
*see Doctor Strange #48-49. --CRAIG
NO, YOUR DUTIES LIE ELSEWHERE, AS DO MY OWN.
UNTIL SALOMÉ HAS FALLEN, WE MUST CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORT ON THE ACQUISITION OF NECROMANTIC POWER!
AND YET, TO LEAVE SUCH A THREAT UNADDRESSED WOULD BE TO COURT DISASTER!
IT SEEMS THE COURSE OF ACTION IS CLEAR.
MY SECRET DEFENDERS MUST CONTINUE THEIR WORK...
...ALBEIT, PERHAPS, UNDER THE GUIDING HAND OF A FRESH STEWARD.
AND A FITTING CANDIDATE FOR SUCH STEWARDSHIP WAITS NOT FAR BEYOND THESE WALLS!

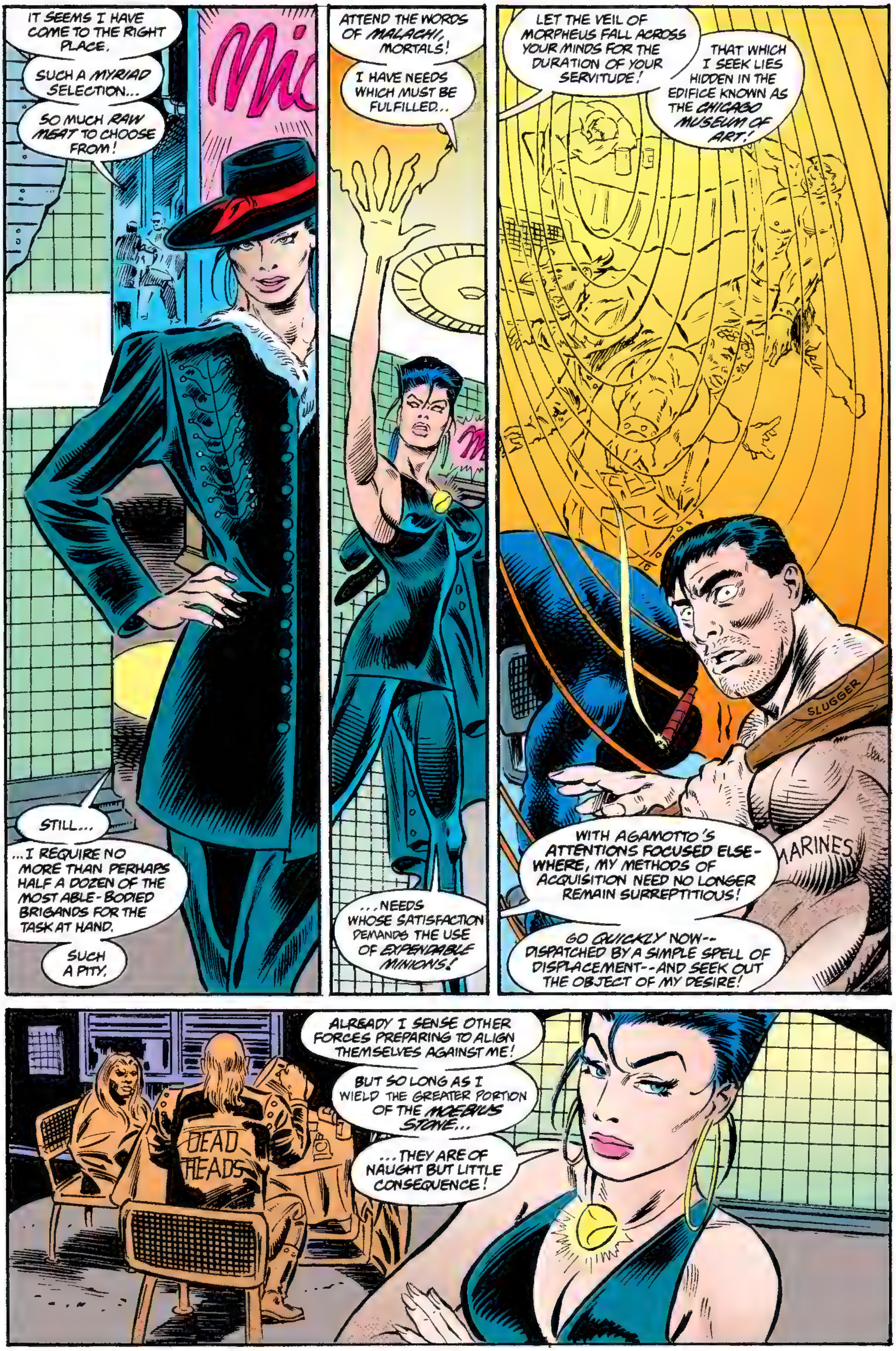

ANOTHER SANCTUM, IN A BETTER, BRIGHTER PART OF THE WORLD -- BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.
THE OFFICES AND LIVING QUARTERS OF RENOWNED MYSTIC, SAGE AND SCHOLAR, DOCTOR ANTHONY DRUID.
FOR THE LAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, NEIGHBORS AND PASSERS BY HAVE BEEN UNNERVED BY THE STRANGE LIGHTS AND SOUNDS THAT EMANATE FROM WITHIN.
THOUGH WHAT DARK PURPOSE THESE PHENOMENA SERVE...
...FEW WOULD DARE SPECULATE!
IT IS DONE!
THE BINDING HAS BEEN RENEWED!
THE RITE SHOULD MAINTAIN THE DESIRED EFFECT FOR YET ANOTHER ASTROLOGICAL CYCLE!
PERHAPS NOW I MIGHT PARTAKE OF SOME WELL-DESERVED--
EH?
THE WARDS!
WHAT FORCE IS THIS THAT SO CASUALLY BREACHES MY DEFENSES?
ANTHONY DRUID!
YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED TO SERVE...
...AND SERVE YOU SHALL!
LET OUR MINDS BE AS ONE!
STEPHEN... STRANGE?
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS UNWARRANTED--

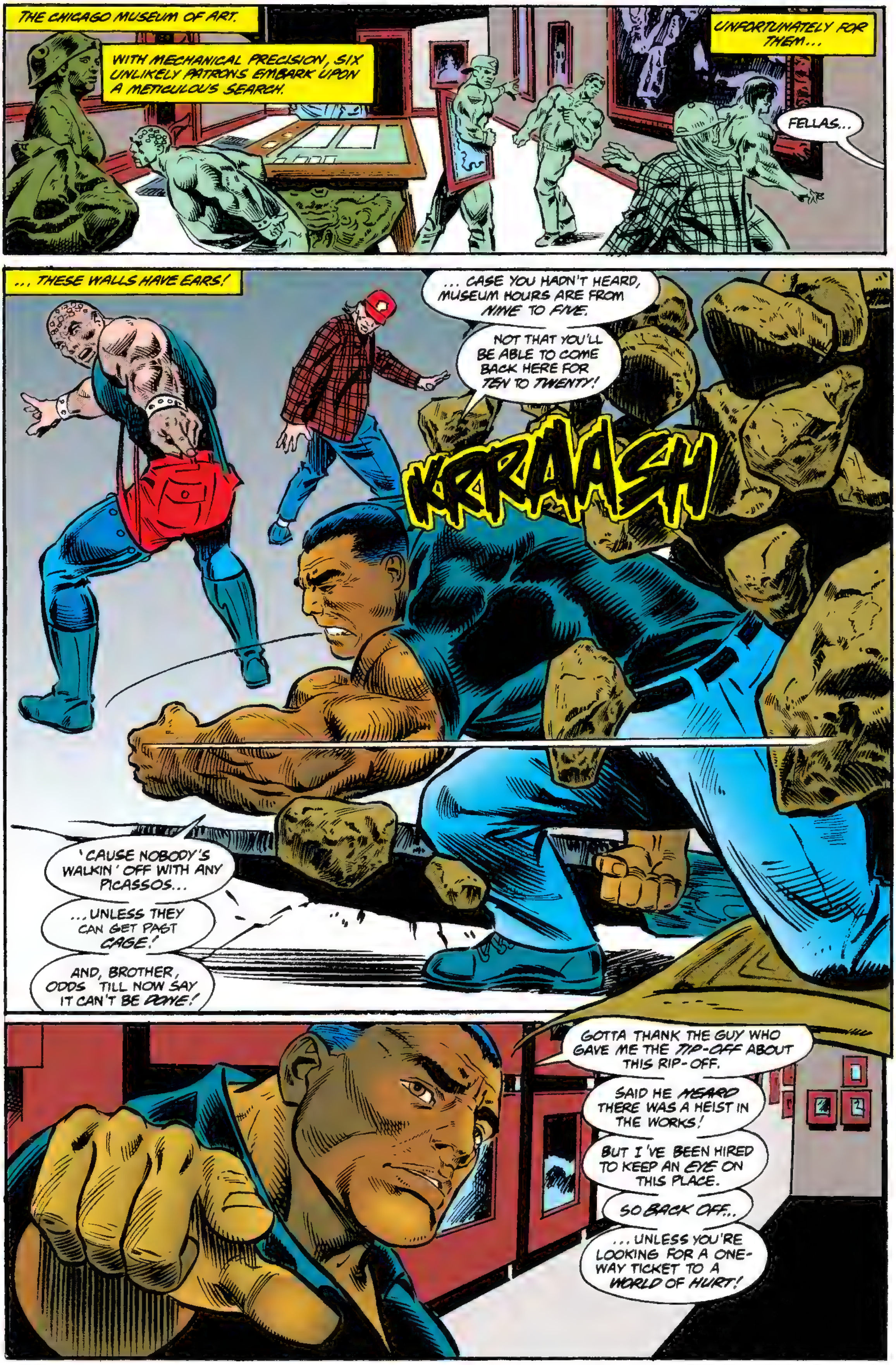

INTRUSION.
COMPLETE.
TOTAL.
MIND AND BODY.
AT THE TOUCH OF STRANGE'S ASTRAL FORM, DRUID'S THIRD EYE TURNS INWARD, ILLUMINATING SHARDS OF THE PAST.
HIS PAST.
THE TRIP TO TIBET IN ANSWER TO A MYSTERIOUS SUMMONS.
THE OBSTACLES HE WAS FORCED TO OVERCOME TO REACH HIS GOAL.
THE AGED LAMA.
THE LAMA WHO WAS, IN ACTUALITY, DOCTOR STRANGE'S MENTOR, THE ANCIENT ONE!
A GNARLED HAND THAT UNLOCKED THE POTENTIAL OF HIS MIND, MERGING THE POWER OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS WHICH WAS HIS BIRTHRIGHT WITH THE MYSTIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE EAST.
A HAND WHICH UNVEILED HIS DESTINY--TO BE THE MYSTIC HARBINGER OF DOCTOR STRANGE!*
NOW, DRUID'S MIND IS ASSAILED BY FRESH IMAGES!
A WOMAN. UNSPEAKABLE ANCIENT. UNIMAGINABLE POWERFUL. UNDENIABLY A THREAT TO THE NATURAL ORDER.
PAIN--AND A COMPULSION TO ACT UPON THIS UNWANTED INSIGHT--EXPLODE WITHIN DRUID'S PSYCHE.
HE SCREAMS.
THE SPELL IS COMPLETE.
THE DIE IS CAST.
THE MANTLE, PASSED.
AND FROM THIS MOMENT HENCE, ANTHONY DRUID'S LIFE SHALL NEVERMORE BE WHOLLY...
...HIS OWN!
*As revealed in AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT #37. --CRAIG
DeCAIRE

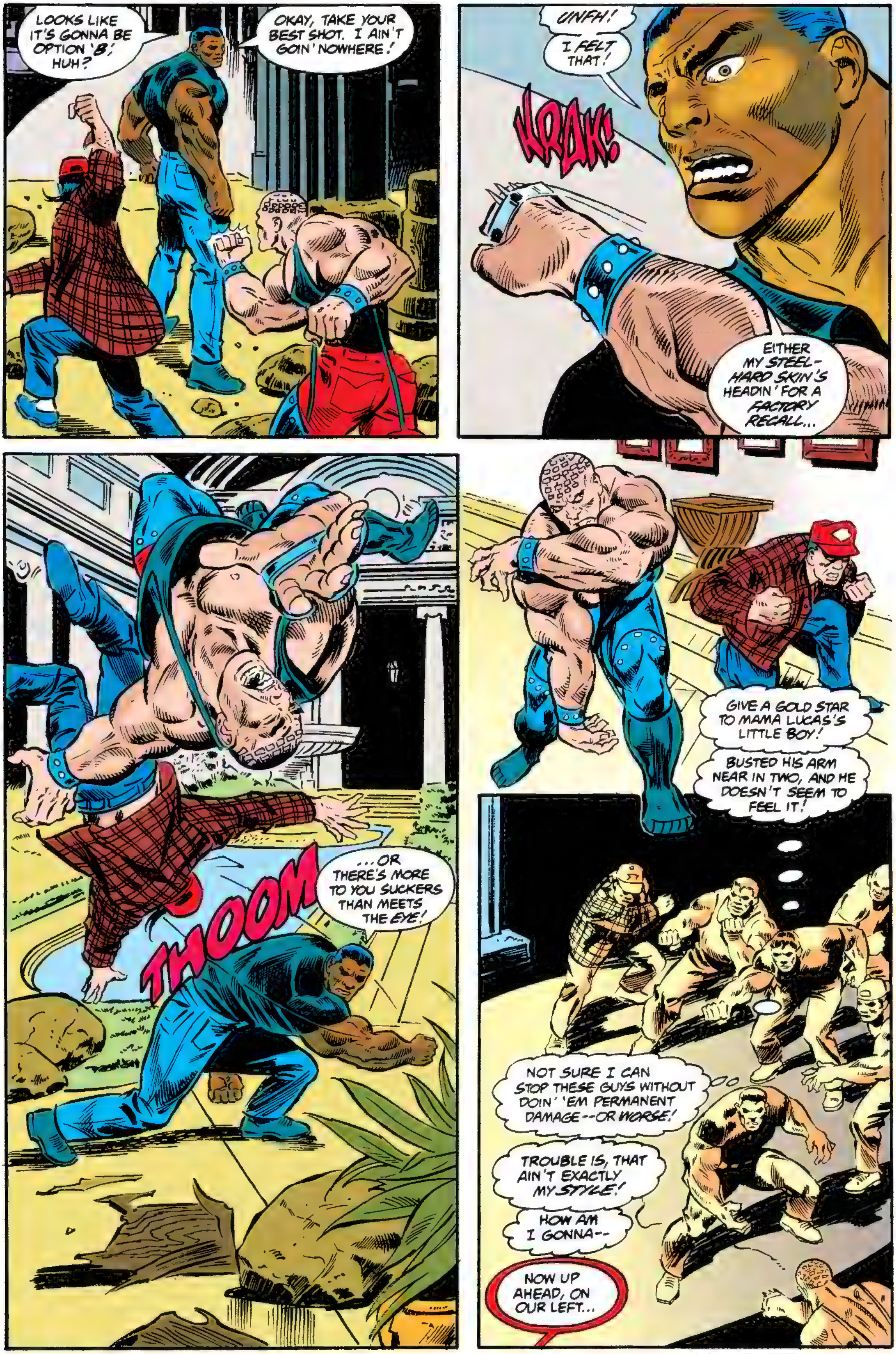

AND THEN, AS SUDDENLY AS IT BEGAN, THE ORDEAL...
... IS OVER.
MAY THE CELTIC TRINITY CURSE YOU, SORCERER!
CURSE YOU...
... AS YOU HAVE NOW CURSED ME!
ANTHONY?
I HEARD YOU CRY OUT!
IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
JILLIAN!
NO, EVERYTHING IS NOT "ALL RIGHT!"
FAR FROM IT!
YOU KNOW I AM NEVER, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, TO BE DISTURBED DURING MY...
... CONJURATIONS.
IT WAS JUST SUCH A FAILURE TO FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS THAT LED TO YOUR CURRENT CONDITION!
WELL, PARDON ME FOR LIVING-- OR FOR BEING CONCERNED!
IT'S OBVIOUS SOMETHING MAJOR JUST WENT DOWN.
WOULD YOU CARE TO SHARE IT WITH ME?

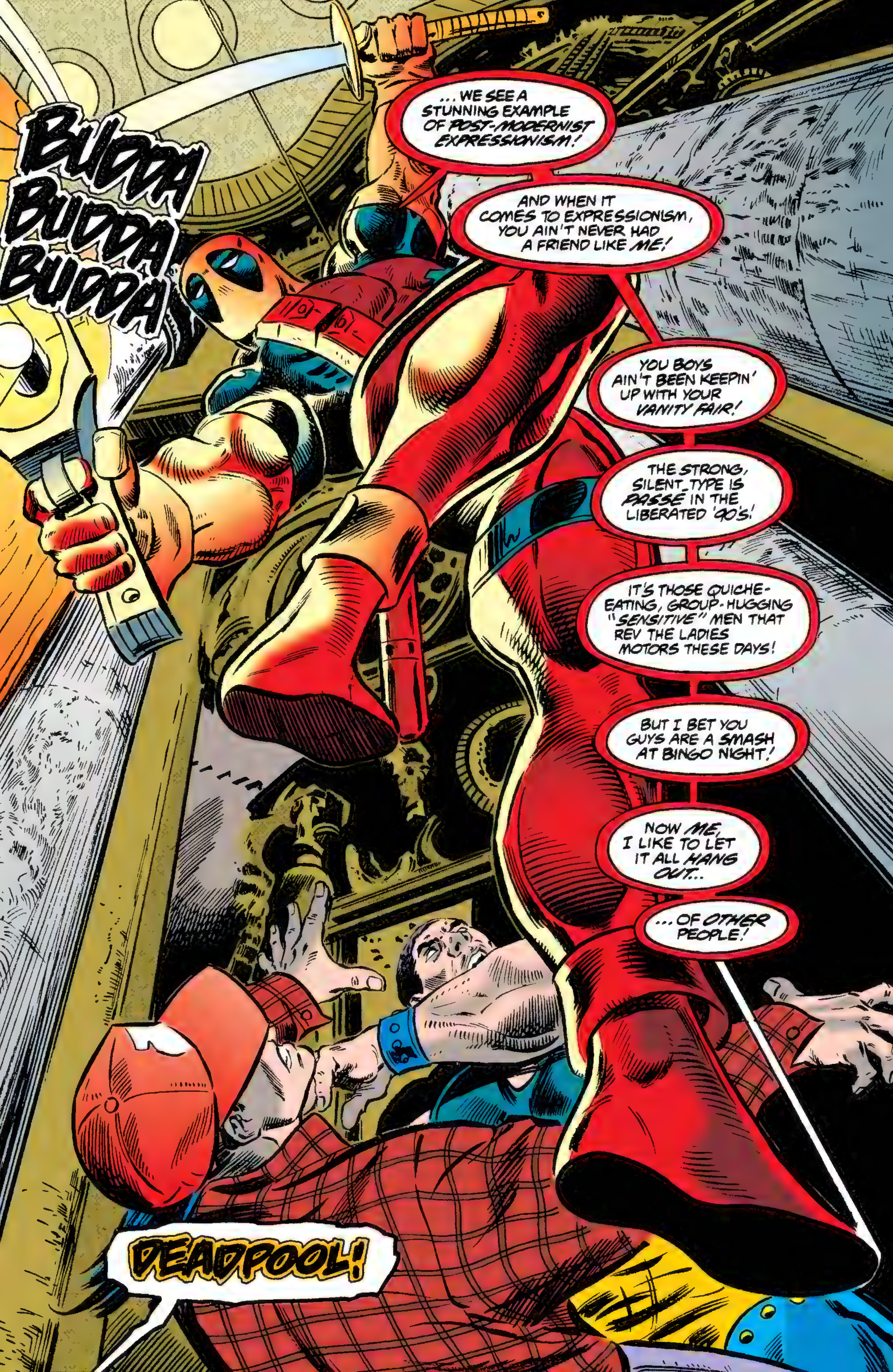

WHATEVER YOU SAY, ANTHONY!
EXIT JILLIAN WOODS, ENTER--SHADO-WOMAN!
NOW QUIT BEING SO TIGHT-LIPPED AND 'FESS UP!
WHAT GOES HERE?
IN DUE COURSE.
FOR NOW, ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT THERE IS A THREAT UPON THE MYSTIC HORIZON-- ONE WHICH NEEDS BE DEALT WITH!
IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU ASSUMED YOUR SHADOW-FORM!
I'VE JUST EXPERIENCED A... POWERFUL PRECOGNITIVE FLASH, JILLIAN.
HOW-- OR WHY-- IS IRRELEVANT AT THIS JUNCTURE.
MY VISION CONCERNED THE MOEBIUS STONE, AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT OF LIMITLESS MYSTIC POTENTIAL SHATTERED EONS AGO INTO A THOUSAND FRAGMENTS BY AGAMOTTO HIMSELF!
WHAT DOES THIS STONE DO?
PRAY YOU NEED NEVER LEARN.
WITH AGAMOTTO ABSENT FROM THIS SPHERE, CERTAIN... DARK FORCES... HAVE SUCCESSFULLY RECONSTRUCTED THE GEM.
SAVE FOR TWO ERRANT PIECES.
HEY, "DARK FORCES" ARE MY SPECIALTY. LET'S MOVE OUT!
IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT TO ACT PREMATURELY.
THE REMAINING FRAGMENTS SHALL REQUIRE... DEFENDERS ... UNTIL THE TIME OF OUR ARRIVAL.
SO YOU INTEND TO USE YOUR POWERS OF PERSUASION TO MESMERIZE ANOTHER SHOCK TROOP?*
NOT THIS TIME, JILLIAN.
TODAY, A SIMPLE PHONE CALL SHOULD SUFFICE.
THE FIRST OF THE FRAGMENTS LIES IN CHICAGO.
I SHALL CONTACT THE LOCAL TALENT...
*As he did in Quasar #45-46. --CRAIG

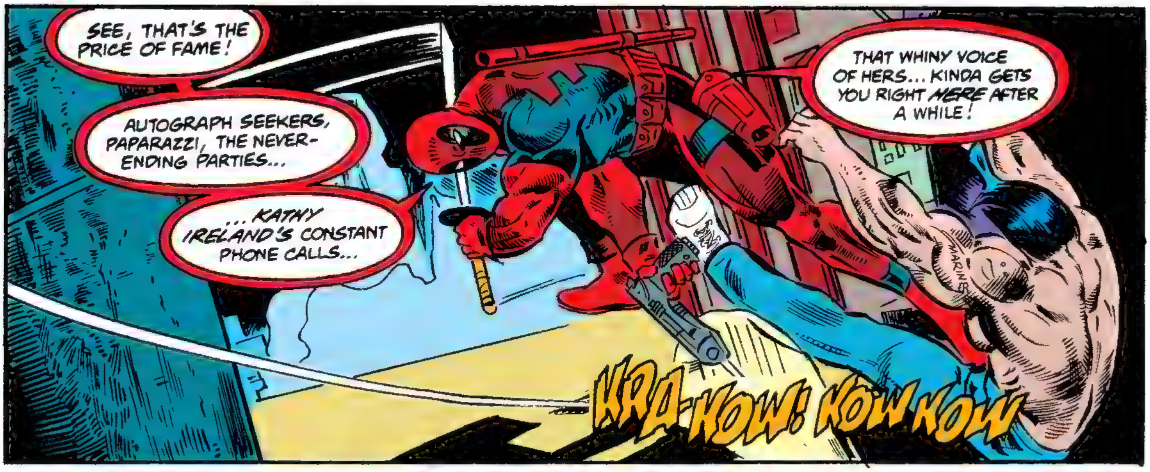

"...ALONG WITH SOMEONE A BIT LESS...SCRUPULOUS."
DESIREE
BOMBERS
A RUN-DOWN WATERING HOLE ON THE WINDY CITY'S SOUTH SIDE.
THE NEON SIGN AT THE DOOR BOASTS THE SLOGAN "COME ON DOWN TO BOMBERS AND GET SMASHED!"
CASE IN POINT....
Mick's BAR
MARINES
YO RAP
APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY...
...IT'S AN UNUSUALLY QUIET NIGHT.
SPLENDID!

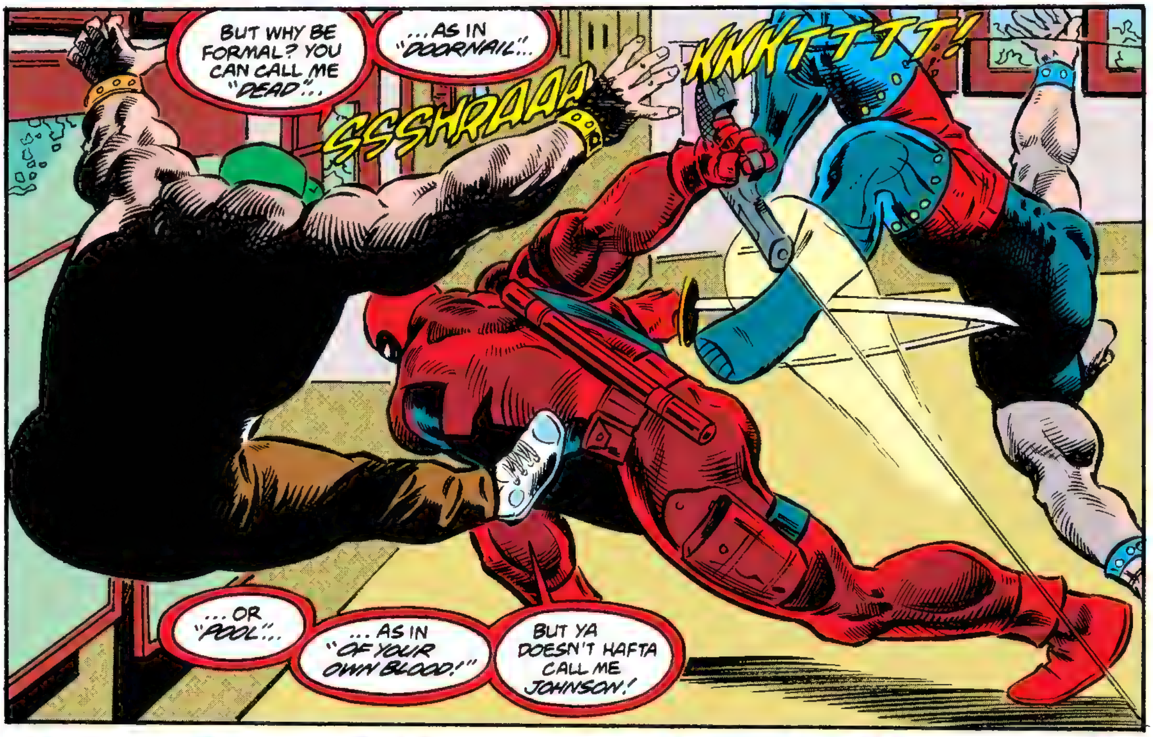

IT SEEMS I HAVE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE.
SUCH A *MYRIAD* SELECTION...
SO MUCH *RAW MEAT* TO CHOOSE FROM!
Mi
STILL...
...I REQUIRE NO MORE THAN PERHAPS HALF A DOZEN OF THE MOST ABLE-BODIED BRIGANDS FOR THE TASK AT HAND.
SUCH A PITY.
ATTEND THE WORDS OF *MALACHI*, MORTALS!
I HAVE NEEDS WHICH MUST BE FULFILLED...
...NEEDS WHOSE SATISFACTION DEMANDS THE USE OF *EXPENDABLE MINIONS!*
LET THE VEIL OF MORPHEUS FALL ACROSS YOUR MINDS FOR THE DURATION OF YOUR SERVITUDE!
THAT WHICH I SEEK LIES HIDDEN IN THE EDIFICE KNOWN AS THE *CHICAGO MUSEUM OF ART!*
SLUGGER
MARINES
WITH AGAMOTTO'S ATTENTIONS FOCUSED ELSEWHERE, MY METHODS OF ACQUISITION NEED NO LONGER REMAIN SURREPTITIOUS!
GO *QUICKLY* NOW--DISPATCHED BY A SIMPLE SPELL OF DISPLACEMENT--AND SEEK OUT THE OBJECT OF MY DESIRE!
DEAD HEADS
ALREADY I SENSE OTHER FORCES PREPARING TO ALIGN THEMSELVES AGAINST ME!
BUT SO LONG AS I WIELD THE GREATER PORTION OF THE *MOEBIUS STONE*...
...THEY ARE OF NAUGHT BUT LITTLE CONSEQUENCE!

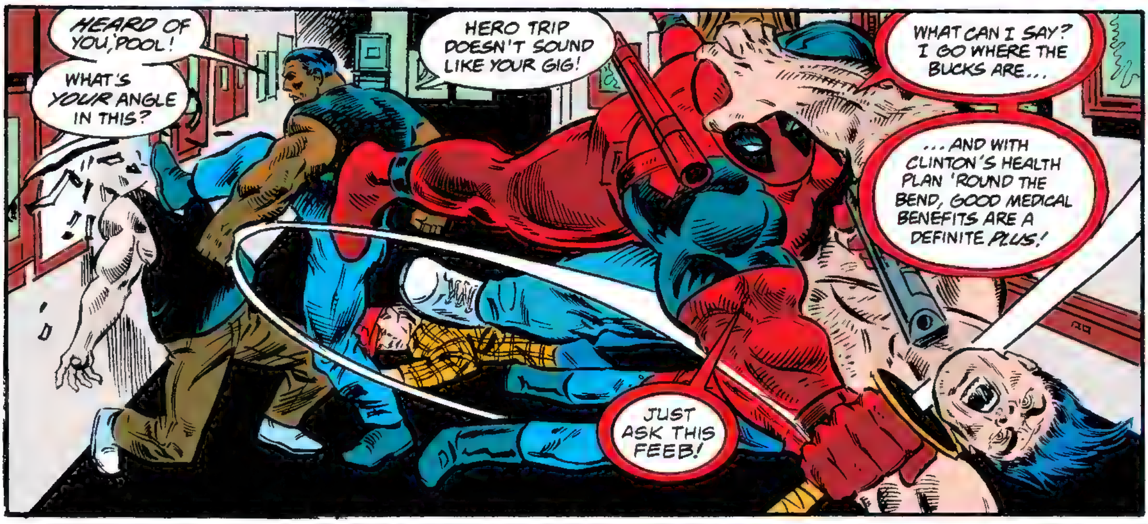

THE CHICAGO MUSEUM OF ART.
WITH MECHANICAL PRECISION, SIX UNLIKELY PATRONS EMBARK UPON A METICULOUS SEARCH.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR THEM...
FELLAS...
..., THESE WALLS HAVE EARS!
... CASE YOU HADN'T HEARD, MUSEUM HOURS ARE FROM NINE TO FIVE.
NOT THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO COME BACK HERE FOR TEN TO TWENTY!
KRRAASH
'CAUSE NOBODY'S WALKIN' OFF WITH ANY PICASSOS...
...UNLESS THEY CAN GET PAST CAGE!
AND, BROTHER, ODDS 'TILL NOW SAY IT CAN'T BE DONE!
GOTTA THANK THE GUY WHO GAVE ME THE TIP-OFF ABOUT THIS RIP-OFF.
SAID HE HEARD THERE WAS A HEIST IN THE WORKS!
BUT I'VE BEEN HIRED TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS PLACE.
SO BACK OFF...
... UNLESS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A ONE-WAY TICKET TO A WORLD OF HURT!

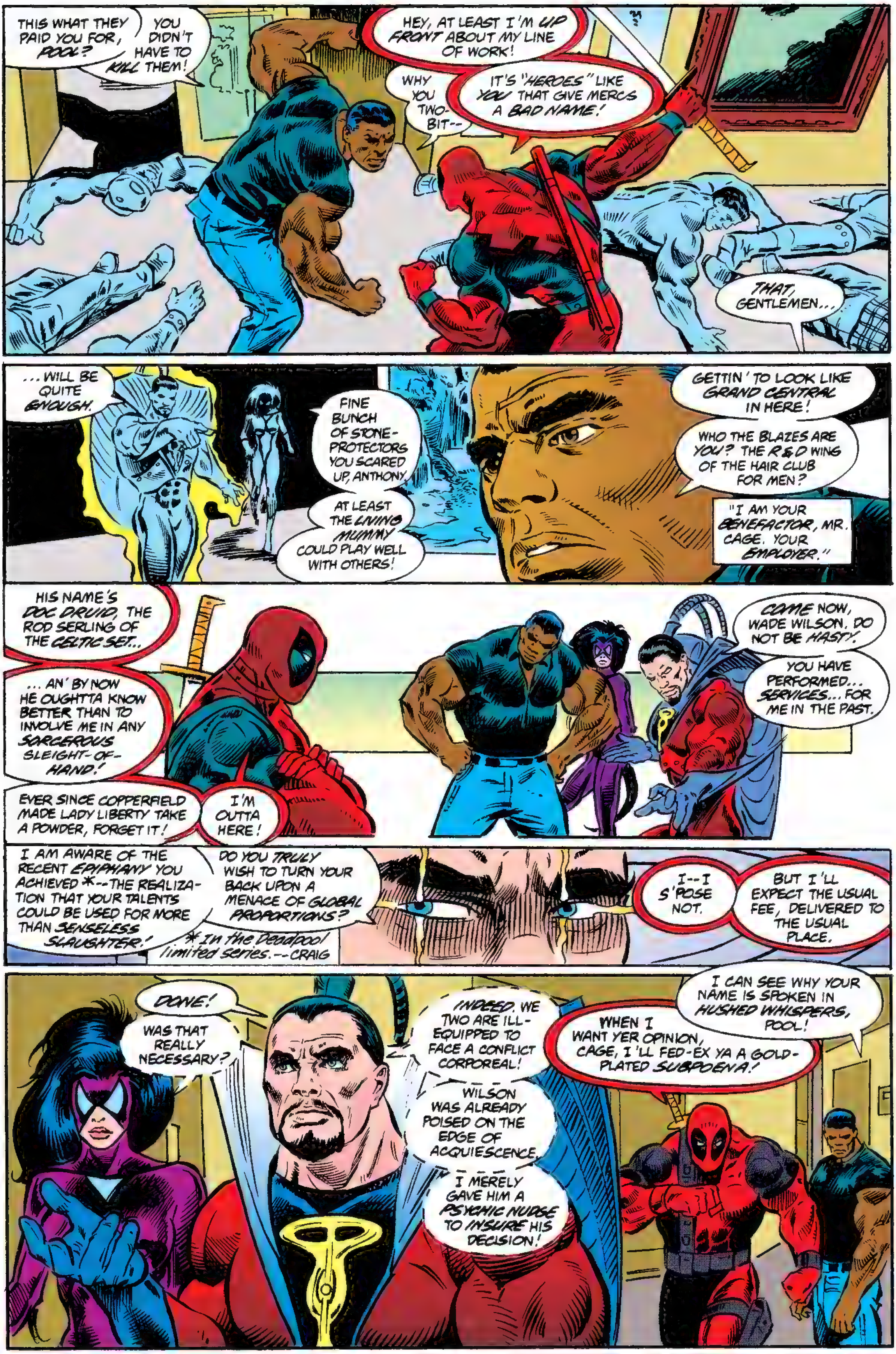

LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA BE OPTION 'B,' HUH?
OKAY, TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT. I AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE!
UNFH!
I FELT THAT!
KRAK!
EITHER MY STEEL-HARD SKIN'S HEADIN' FOR A FACTORY RECALL...
THOOM
...OR THERE'S MORE TO YOU SUCKERS THAN MEETS THE EYE!
GIVE A GOLD STAR TO MAMA LUCAS'S LITTLE BOY!
BUSTED HIS ARM NEAR IN TWO, AND HE DOESN'T SEEM TO FEEL IT!
NOT SURE I CAN STOP THESE GUYS WITHOUT DOIN' 'EM PERMANENT DAMAGE--OR WORSE!
TROUBLE IS, THAT AIN'T EXACTLY MY STYLE!
HOW AM I GONNA--
NOW UP AHEAD, ON OUR LEFT...

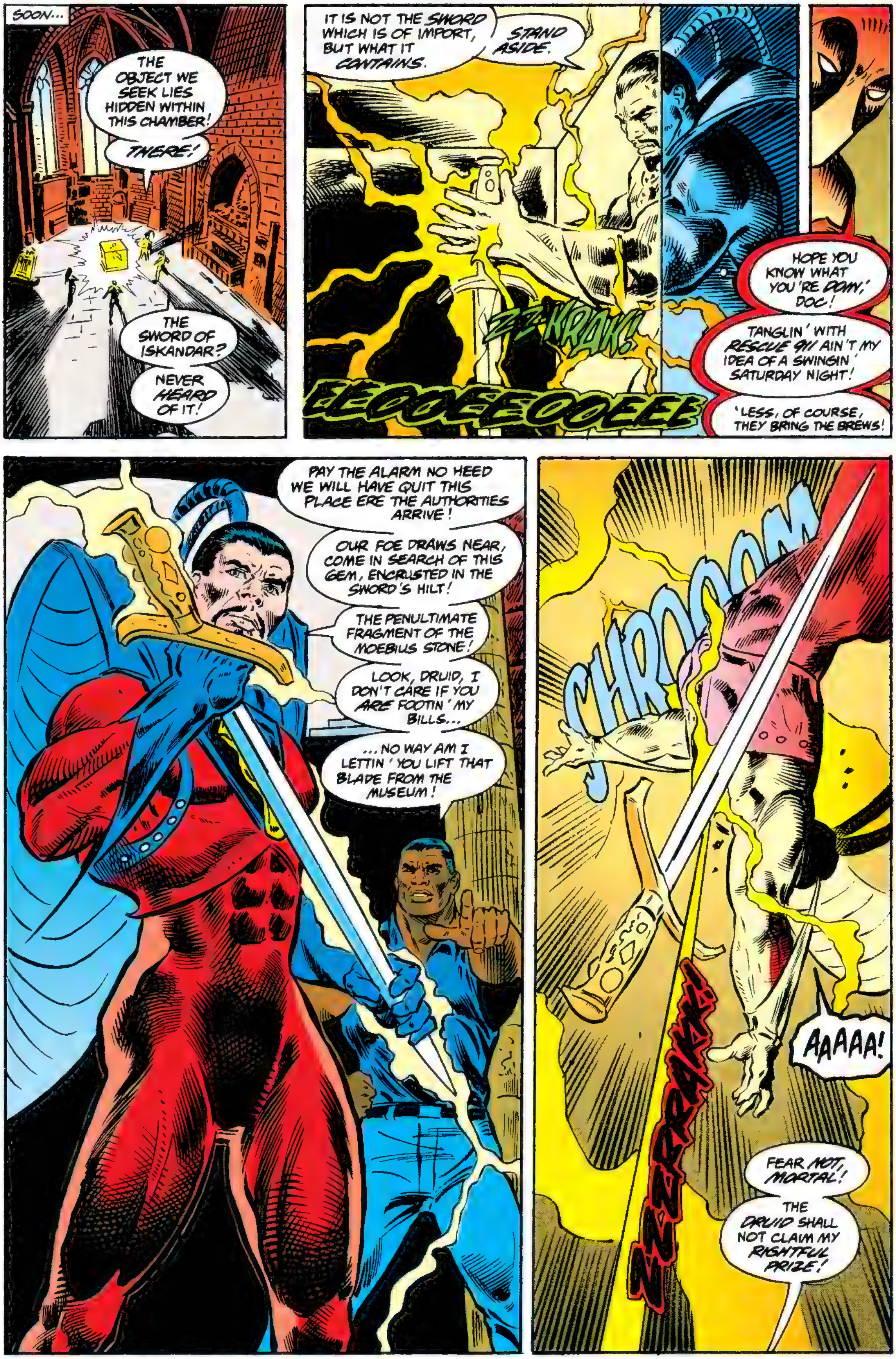

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
...WE SEE A STUNNING EXAMPLE OF POST-MODERNIST EXPRESSIONISM!
AND WHEN IT COMES TO EXPRESSIONISM, YOU AIN'T NEVER HAD A FRIEND LIKE ME!
YOU BOYS AIN'T BEEN KEEPIN' UP WITH YOUR VANITY FAIR!
THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE IS PASSE IN THE LIBERATED '90'S!
IT'S THOSE QUICHE-EATING, GROUP-HUGGING "SENSITIVE" MEN THAT REV THE LADIES MOTORS THESE DAYS!
BUT I BET YOU GUYS ARE A SMASH AT BINGO NIGHT!
NOW ME, I LIKE TO LET IT ALL HANG OUT...
...OF OTHER PEOPLE!
DEADPOOL!

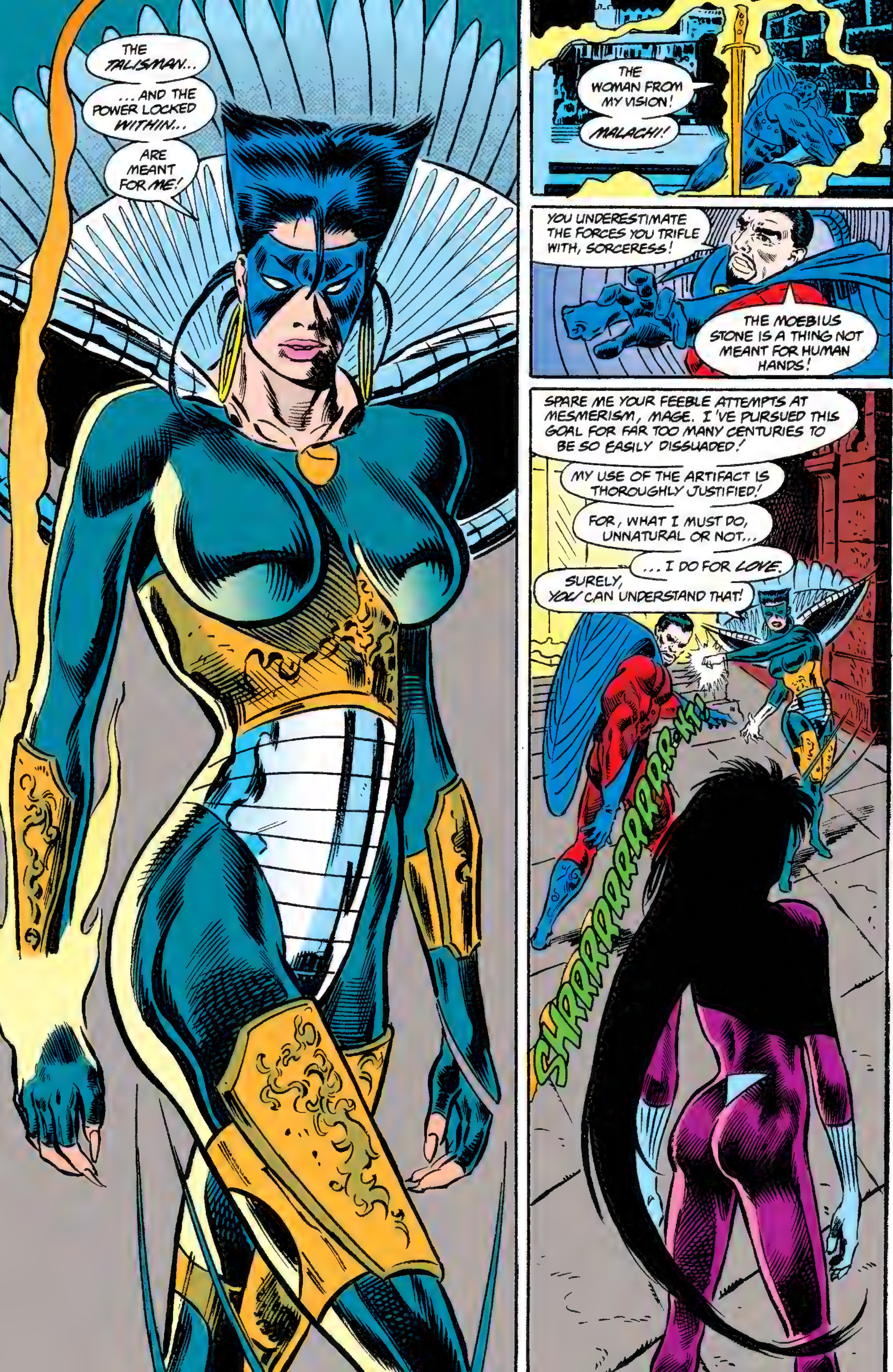

SEE, THAT'S THE PRICE OF FAME!
AUTOGRAPH SEEKERS, PAPARAZZI, THE NEVER-ENDING PARTIES...
...*KATHY IRELAND'S* CONSTANT PHONE CALLS...
THAT WHINY VOICE OF HERS... KINDA GETS YOU RIGHT *HERE* AFTER A WHILE!
MARINES
KRA-KOW! KOW KOW

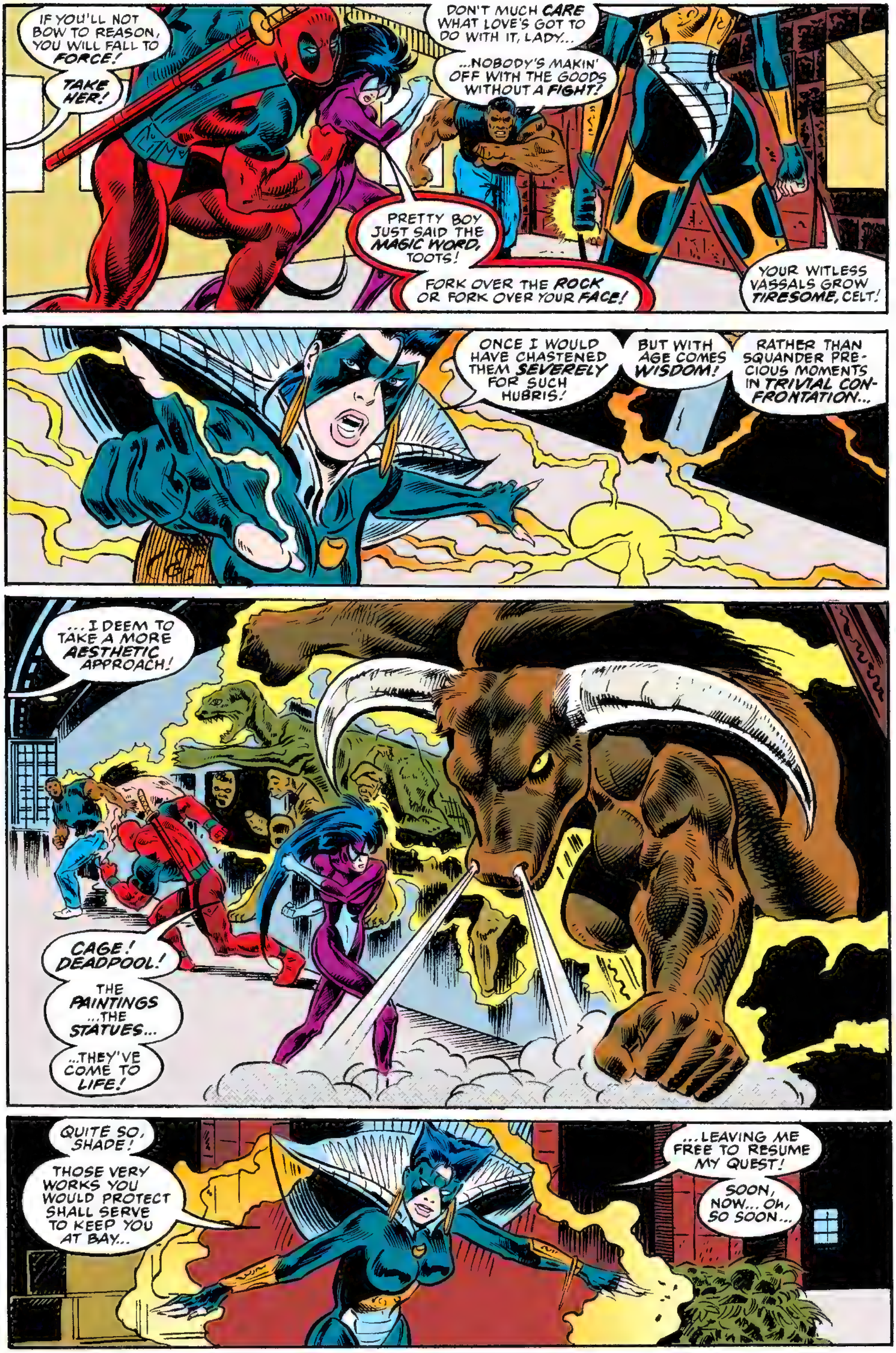

BUT WHY BE FORMAL? YOU CAN CALL ME "*DEAD*"...
..AS IN "*DOORNAIL*"...
SSSHRAAAA
KKKTTTTT!
...OR "*POOL*"...
...AS IN "*OF YOUR OWN BLOOD!*"
BUT YA DOESN'T HAFTA CALL ME *JOHNSON!*

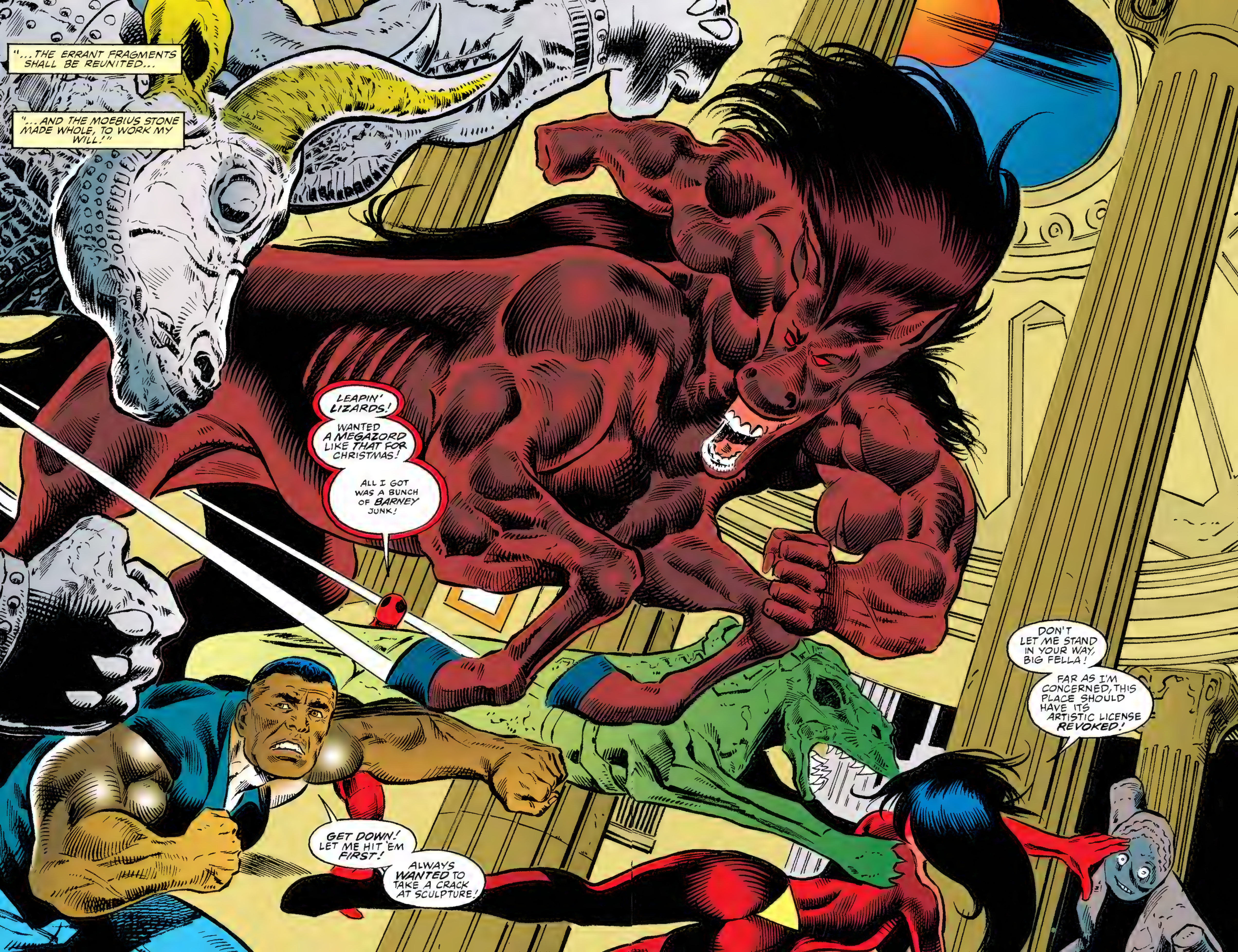

HEARD OF YOU, POOL!
WHAT'S *YOUR* ANGLE IN THIS?
HERO TRIP DOESN'T SOUND LIKE *YOUR* GIG!
WHAT CAN I SAY? I GO WHERE THE BUCKS ARE...
...AND WITH CLINTON'S HEALTH PLAN 'ROUND THE BEND, GOOD MEDICAL BENEFITS ARE A DEFINITE *PLUS!*
JUST ASK THIS FEEB!

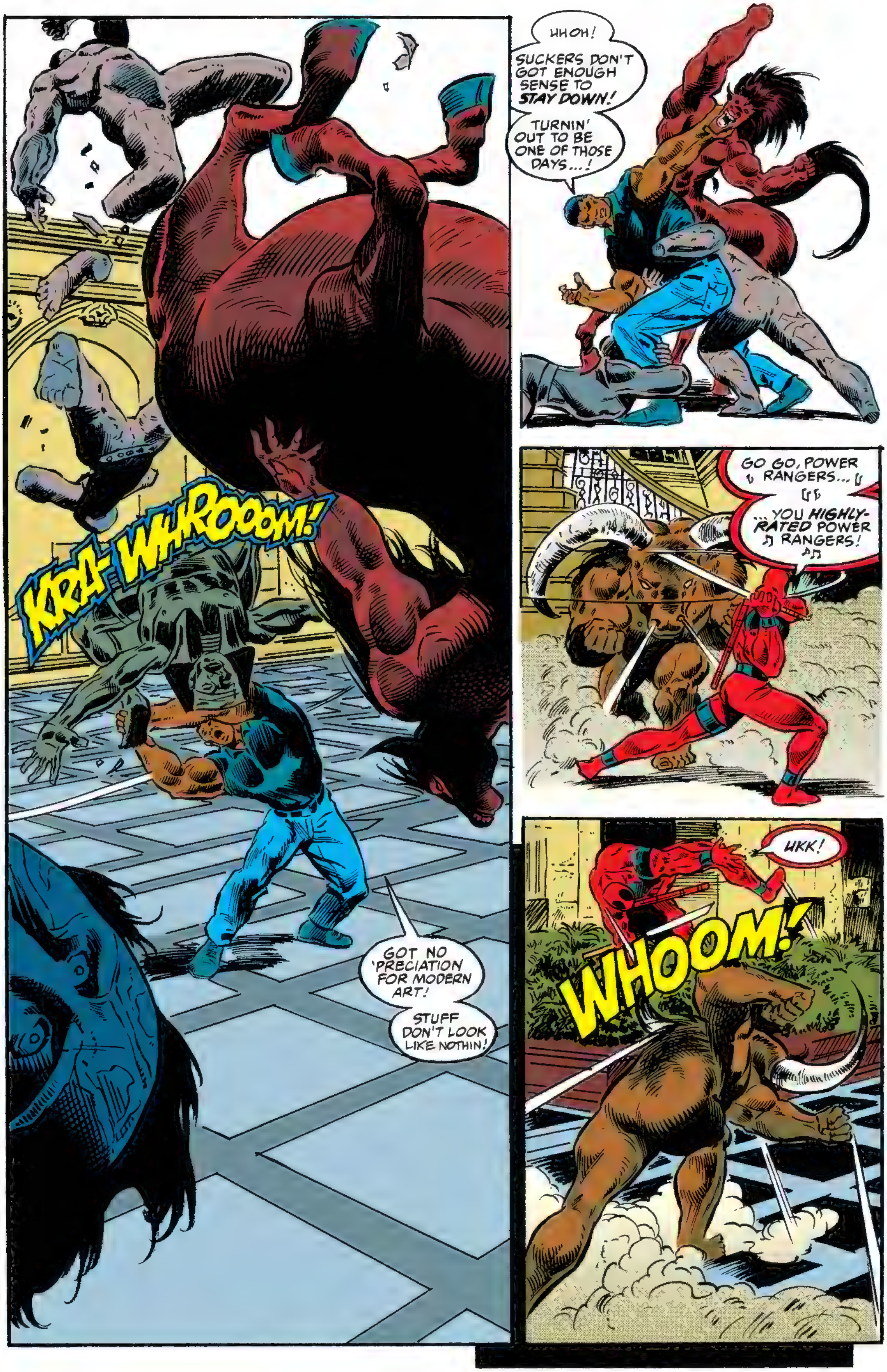

THIS WHAT THEY PAID YOU FOR, POOL?
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL THEM!
HEY, AT LEAST I'M UP FRONT ABOUT MY LINE OF WORK!
WHY YOU TWO-BIT--
IT'S "HEROES" LIKE YOU THAT GIVE MERCS A BAD NAME!
THAT, GENTLEMEN...
...WILL BE QUITE ENOUGH.
FINE BUNCH OF STONE-PROTECTORS YOU SCARED UP, ANTHONY.
AT LEAST THE LIVING MUMMY COULD PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS!
GETTIN' TO LOOK LIKE GRAND CENTRAL IN HERE!
WHO THE BLAZES ARE YOU? THE R&D WING OF THE HAIR CLUB FOR MEN?
"I AM YOUR BENEFACTOR, MR. CAGE. YOUR EMPLOYER."
HIS NAME'S DOC DRUID, THE ROD SERLING OF THE CELTIC SET...
...AN' BY NOW HE OUGHTTA KNOW BETTER THAN TO INVOLVE ME IN ANY SORCEROUS SLEIGHT-OF-HAND!
EVER SINCE COPPERFIELD MADE LADY LIBERTY TAKE A POWDER, FORGET IT!
I'M OUTTA HERE!
COME NOW, WADE WILSON. DO NOT BE HASTY.
YOU HAVE PERFORMED... SERVICES... FOR ME IN THE PAST.
I AM AWARE OF THE RECENT EPIPHANY YOU ACHIEVED *--THE REALIZATION THAT YOUR TALENTS COULD BE USED FOR MORE THAN SENSELESS SLAUGHTER!
DO YOU TRULY WISH TO TURN YOUR BACK UPON A MENACE OF GLOBAL PROPORTIONS?
*In the Deadpool limited series.--CRAIG
I--I S'POSE NOT.
BUT I'LL EXPECT THE USUAL FEE, DELIVERED TO THE USUAL PLACE.
DONE!
WAS THAT REALLY NECESSARY?
INDEED. WE TWO ARE ILL-EQUIPPED TO FACE A CONFLICT CORPOREAL!
WILSON WAS ALREADY POISED ON THE EDGE OF ACQUIESCENCE.
I MERELY GAVE HIM A PSYCHIC NUDGE TO INSURE HIS DECISION!
I CAN SEE WHY YOUR NAME IS SPOKEN IN HUSHED WHISPERS, POOL!
WHEN I WANT YER OPINION, CAGE, I'LL FED-EX YA A GOLD-PLATED SUBPOENA!

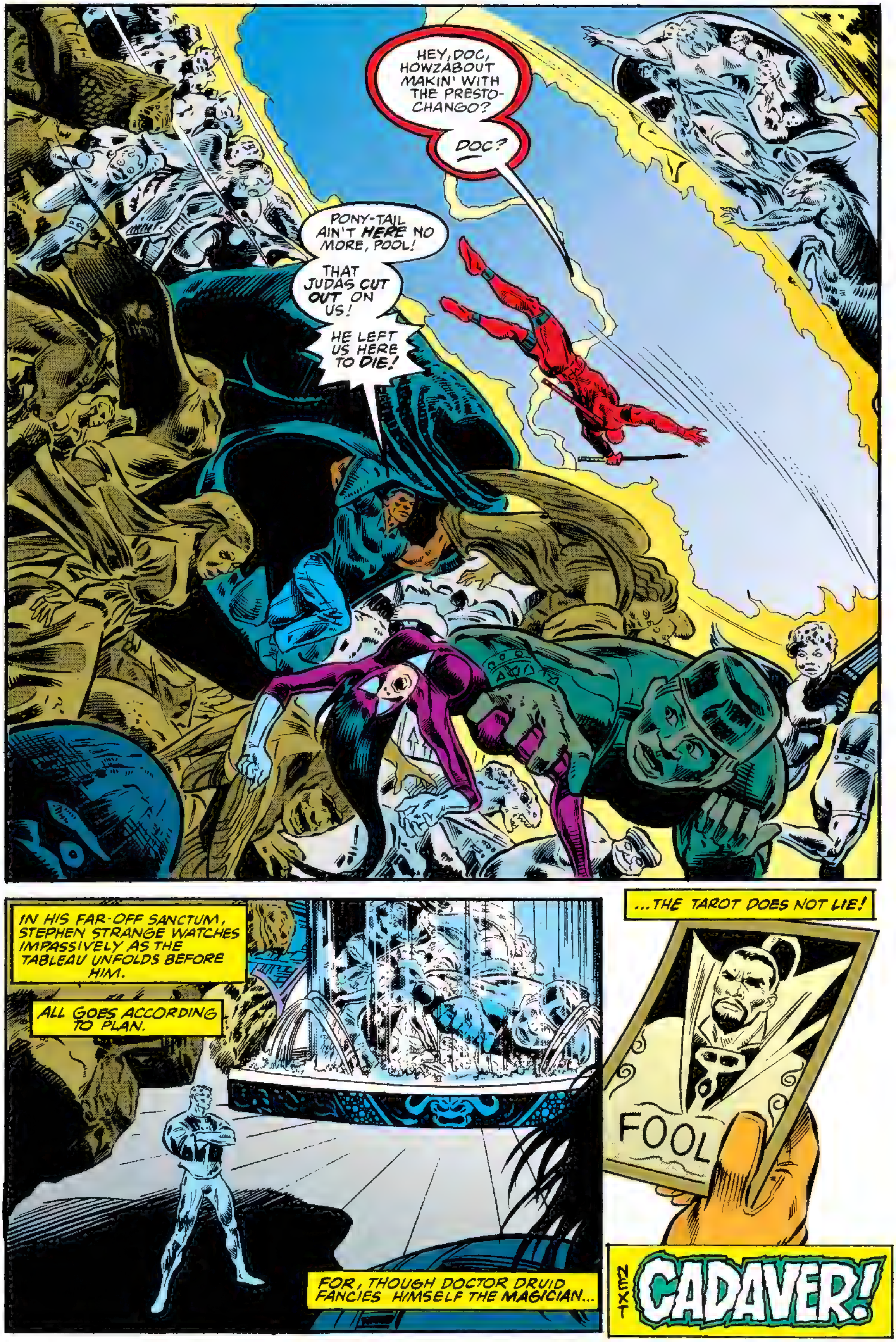

SOON...
THE OBJECT WE SEEK LIES HIDDEN WITHIN THIS CHAMBER!
THERE!
THE SWORD OF ISKANDAR?
NEVER HEARD OF IT!
IT IS NOT THE SWORD WHICH IS OF IMPORT, BUT WHAT IT CONTAINS.
STAND ASIDE.
ZZ-KRAK!
EEOOEEOOEEE
HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN', DOC!
TANGLIN' WITH RESCUE 911 AIN'T MY IDEA OF A SWINGIN' SATURDAY NIGHT!
'LESS, OF COURSE, THEY BRING THE BREWS!
PAY THE ALARM NO HEED WE WILL HAVE QUIT THIS PLACE ERE THE AUTHORITIES ARRIVE!
OUR FOE DRAWS NEAR, COME IN SEARCH OF THIS GEM, ENCRUSTED IN THE SWORD'S HILT!
THE PENULTIMATE FRAGMENT OF THE MOEBIUS STONE!
LOOK, DRUID, I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE FOOTIN' MY BILLS...
...NO WAY AM I LETTIN' YOU LIFT THAT BLADE FROM THE MUSEUM!
SHROOOOM
AAAAA!
ZZZRAAAK!
FEAR NOT, MORTAL!
THE DRUID SHALL NOT CLAIM MY RIGHTFUL PRIZE!

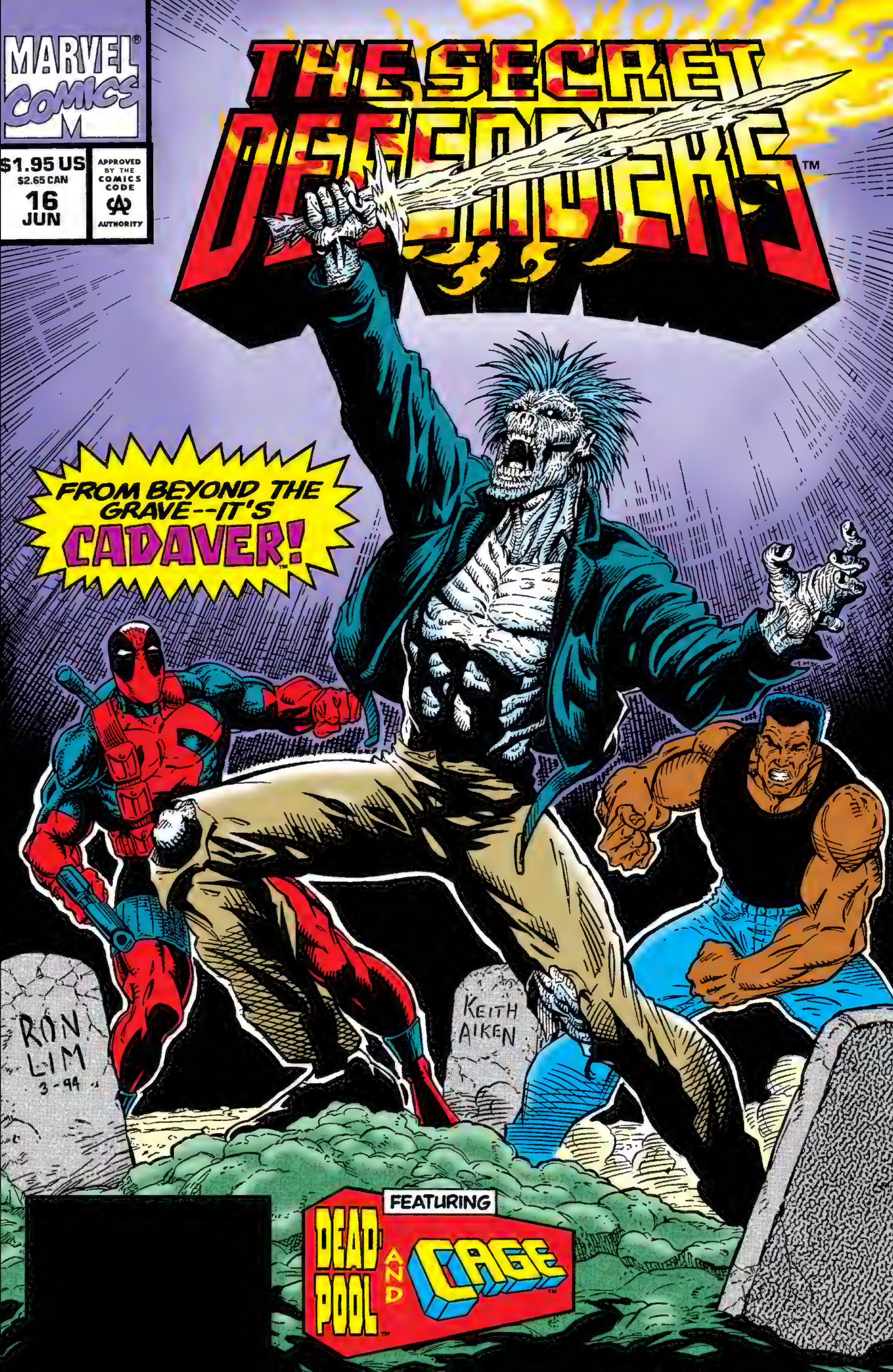

THE TALISMAN...
...AND THE POWER LOCKED WITHIN...
ARE MEANT FOR ME!
THE WOMAN FROM MY VISION!
MALACHI!
YOU UNDERESTIMATE THE FORCES YOU TRIFLE WITH, SORCERESS!
THE MOEBIUS STONE IS A THING NOT MEANT FOR HUMAN HANDS!
SPARE ME YOUR FEEBLE ATTEMPTS AT MESMERISM, MAGE. I'VE PURSUED THIS GOAL FOR FAR TOO MANY CENTURIES TO BE SO EASILY DISSUADED!
MY USE OF THE ARTIFACT IS THOROUGHLY JUSTIFIED!
FOR, WHAT I MUST DO, UNNATURAL OR NOT...
...I DO FOR LOVE.
SURELY, YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT!
SHRRRRRRRRRR-RK!!


IF YOU'LL NOT BOW TO REASON, YOU WILL FALL TO *FORCE!*
TAKE HER!
DON'T MUCH *CARE* WHAT LOVE'S GOT TO DO WITH IT, LADY...
...NOBODY'S MAKIN' OFF WITH THE GOODS WITHOUT A *FIGHT!*
PRETTY BOY JUST SAID THE *MAGIC WORD,* TOOTS!
FORK OVER THE *ROCK* OR FORK OVER YOUR *FACE!*
YOUR WITLESS VASSALS GROW *TIRESOME,* CELT!
ONCE I WOULD HAVE CHASTENED THEM *SEVERELY* FOR SUCH HUBRIS!
BUT WITH AGE COMES *WISDOM!*
RATHER THAN SQUANDER PRECIOUS MOMENTS IN *TRIVIAL CONFRONTATION...*
...I DEEM TO TAKE A MORE *AESTHETIC* APPROACH!
CAGE! DEADPOOL!
THE *PAINTINGS* ...THE *STATUES...*
...THEY'VE COME TO *LIFE!*
QUITE SO, SHADE!
THOSE VERY WORKS YOU WOULD PROTECT SHALL SERVE TO KEEP YOU AT BAY...
...LEAVING ME FREE TO RESUME MY QUEST!
SOON, NOW... OH, SO SOON...


"...THE ERRANT FRAGMENTS SHALL BE REUNITED...
"...AND THE MOEBIUS STONE MADE WHOLE, TO WORK MY WILL!"
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! WANTED A MEGAZORD LIKE THAT FOR CHRISTMAS!
ALL I GOT WAS A BUNCH OF BARNEY JUNK!
DON'T LET ME STAND IN YOUR WAY, BIG FELLA!
FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THIS PLACE SHOULD HAVE ITS ARTISTIC LICENSE REVOKED!
GET DOWN! LET ME HIT 'EM FIRST!
ALWAYS WANTED TO TAKE A CRACK AT SCULPTURE!


KRA-WHROOOM!
GOT NO 'PRECIATION FOR MODERN ART!
STUFF DON'T LOOK LIKE NOTHIN!
UH OH!
SUCKERS DON'T GOT ENOUGH SENSE TO STAY DOWN!
TURNIN' OUT TO BE ONE OF THOSE DAYS...!
GO GO, POWER RANGERS... ♪
...YOU HIGHLY-RATED POWER ♪ RANGERS! ♪♪
UKK!
WHOOM!


HEY, DOC, HOWZABOUT MAKIN' WITH THE PRESTO-CHANGO?
DOC?
PONY-TAIL AIN'T HERE NO MORE, POOL!
THAT JUDAS CUT OUT ON US!
HE LEFT US HERE TO DIE!
IN HIS FAR-OFF SANCTUM, STEPHEN STRANGE WATCHES IMPASSIVELY AS THE TABLEAU UNFOLDS BEFORE HIM.
ALL GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN.
FOR, THOUGH DOCTOR DRUID FANCIES HIMSELF THE MAGICIAN...
...THE TAROT DOES NOT LIE!
FOOL
NEXT
CADAVER!


MARVEL® COMICS
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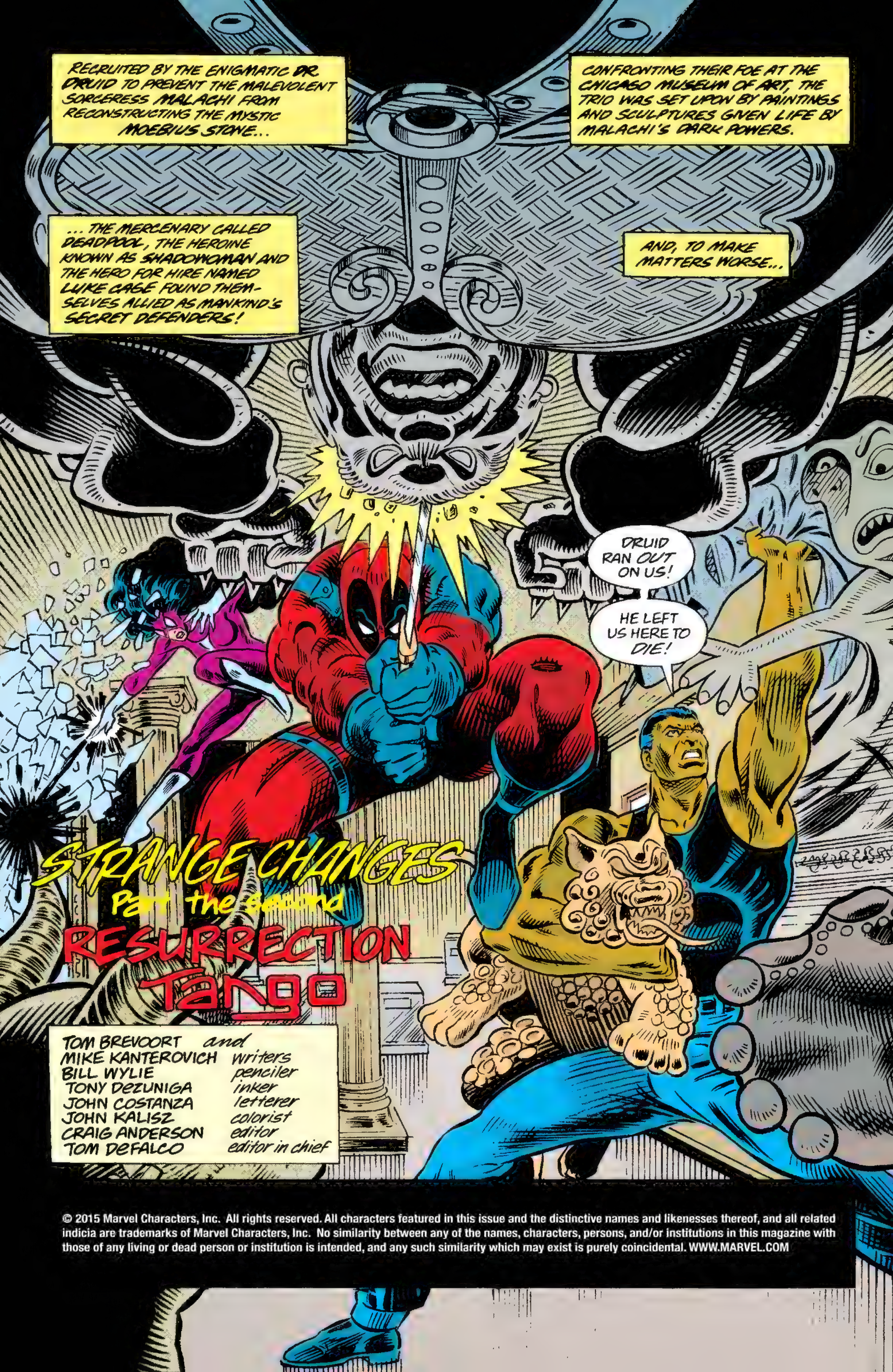
THE SECRET DEFENDERS™
FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE--IT'S CADAVER!™
RON LIM 3-94
KEITH AIKEN
FEATURING
DEAD-POOL™ AND CAGE™


RECRUITED BY THE ENIGMATIC DR. DRUID TO PREVENT THE MALEVOLENT SORCERESS MALACHI FROM RECONSTRUCTING THE MYSTIC MOEBIUS STONE...
... THE MERCENARY CALLED DEADPOOL, THE HEROINE KNOWN AS SHADOWOMAN AND THE HERO FOR HIRE NAMED LUKE CAGE FOUND THEMSELVES ALLIED AS MANKIND'S SECRET DEFENDERS!
CONFRONTING THEIR FOE AT THE CHICAGO MUSEUM OF ART, THE TRIO WAS SET UPON BY PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES GIVEN LIFE BY MALACHI'S DARK POWERS.
AND, TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE...
DRUID RAN OUT ON US!
HE LEFT US HERE TO DIE!

STRANGE CHANGES
Part the second
RESURRECTION TANGO

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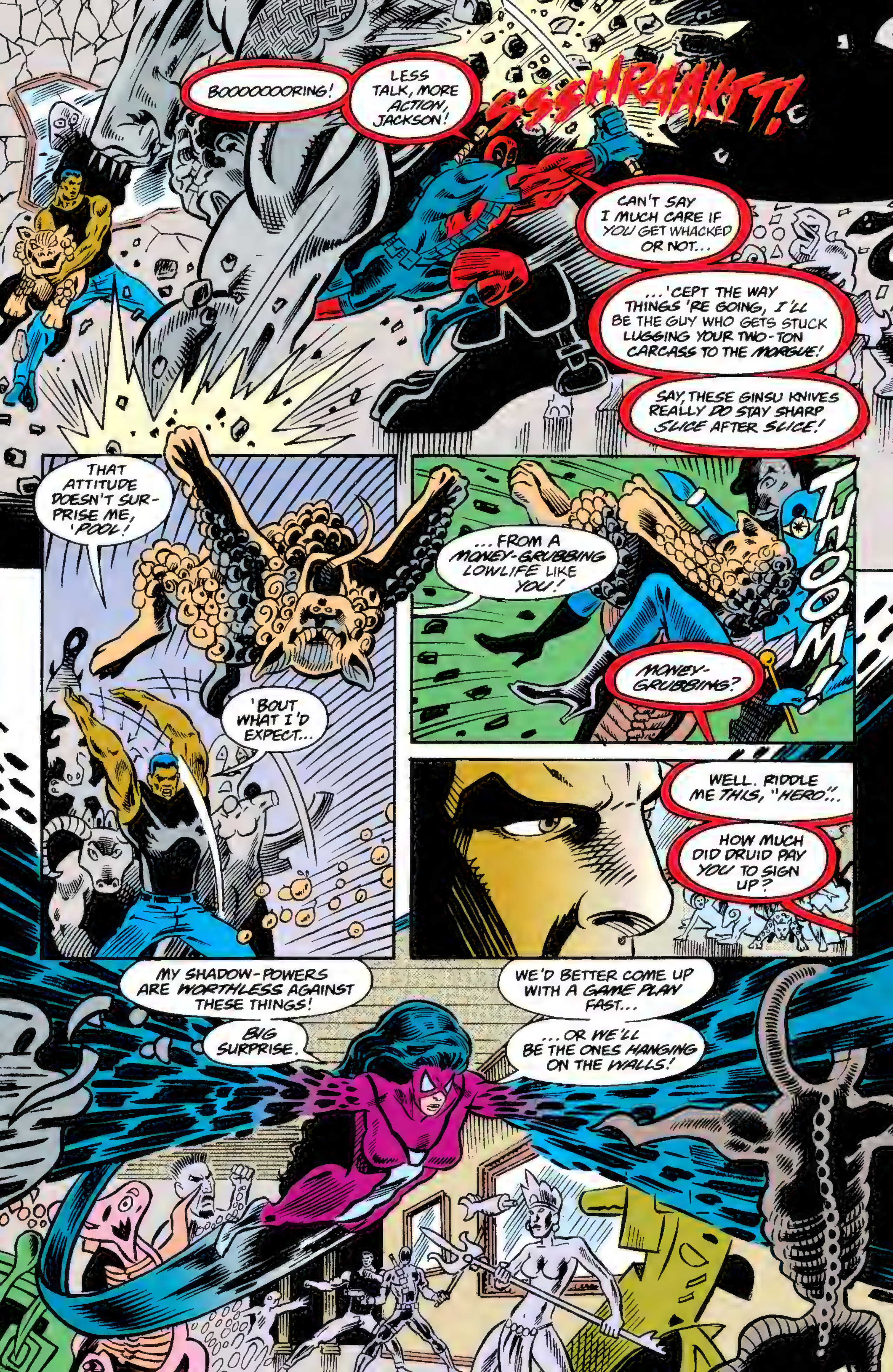
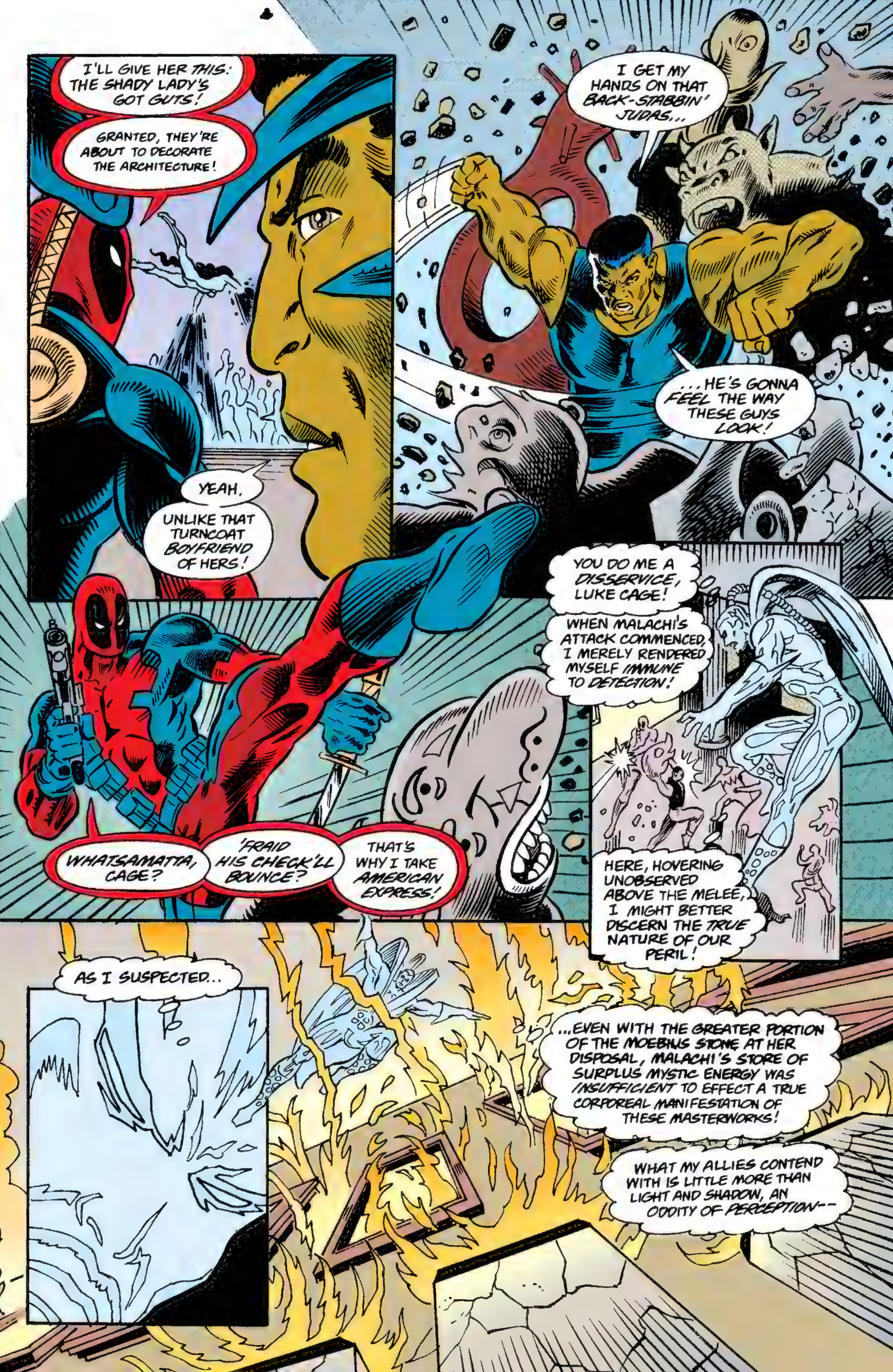
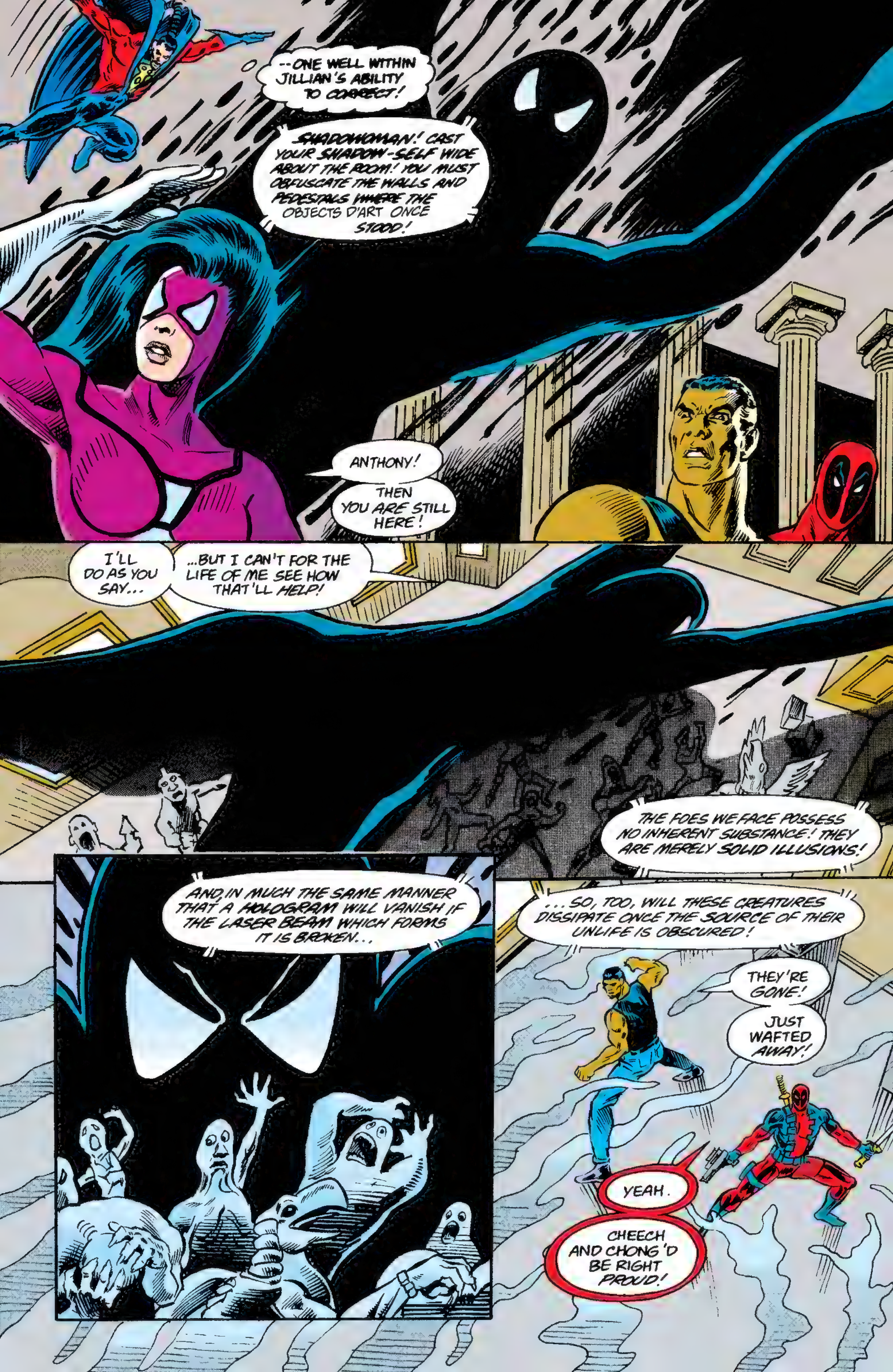
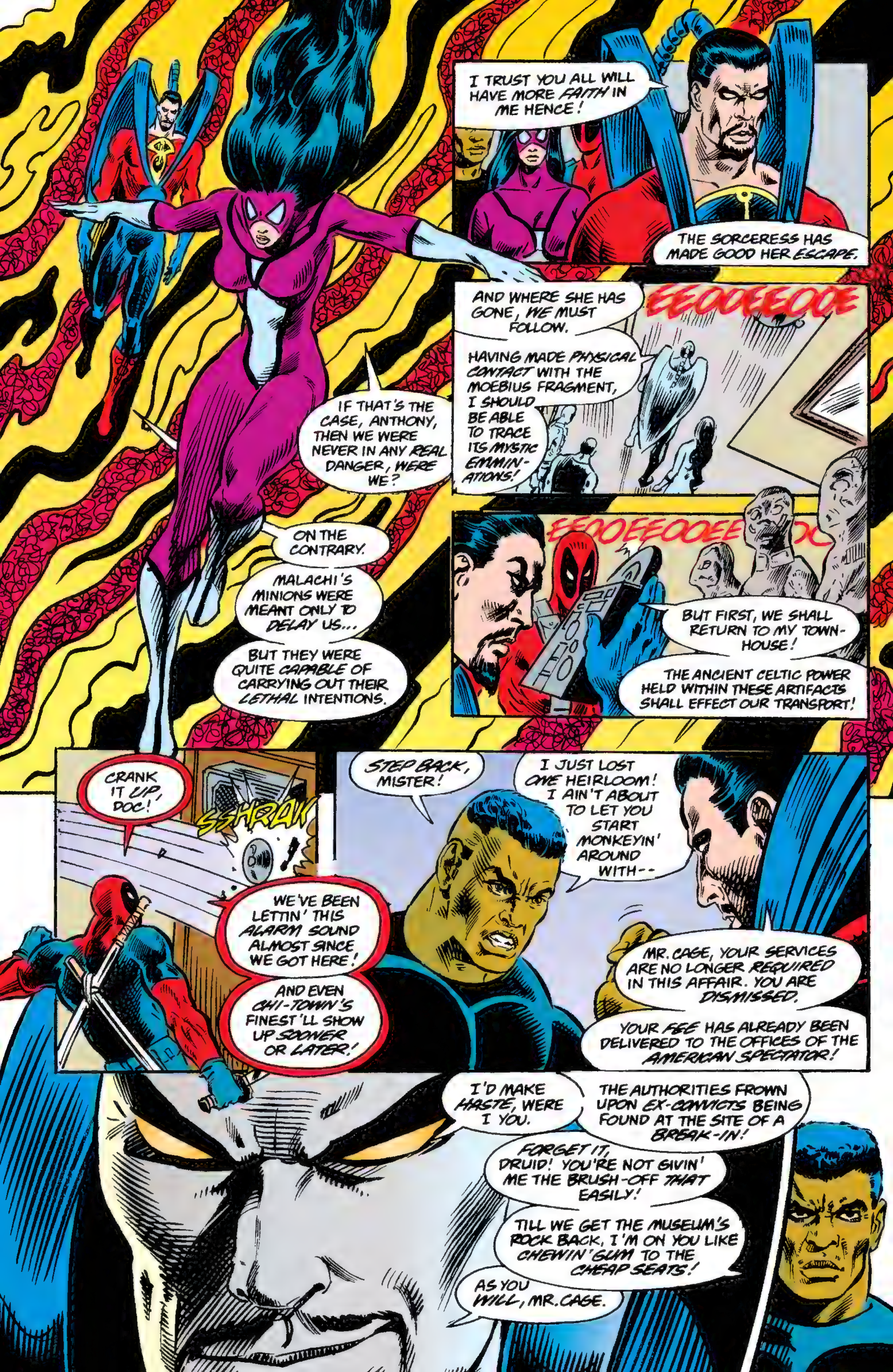
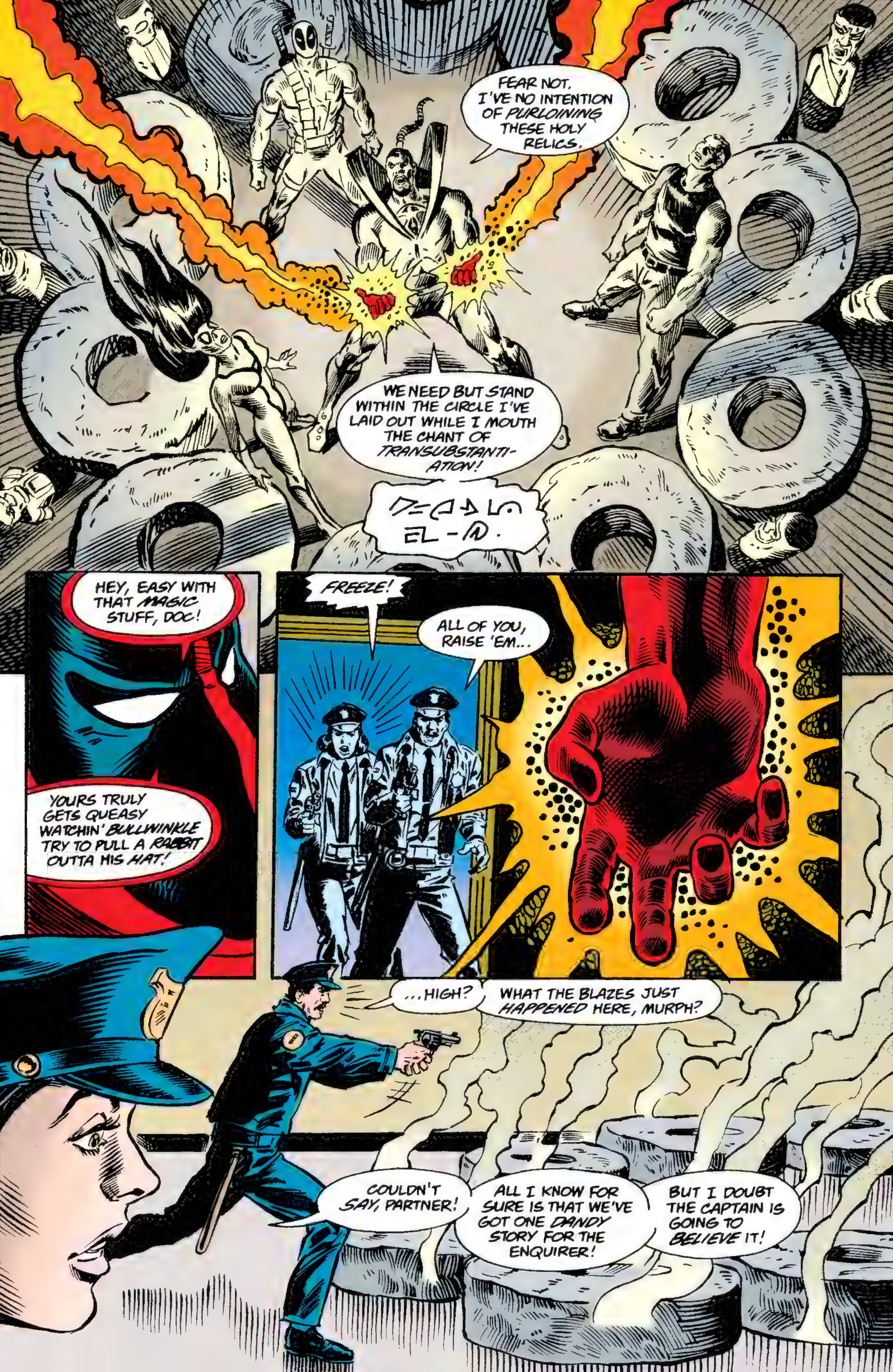
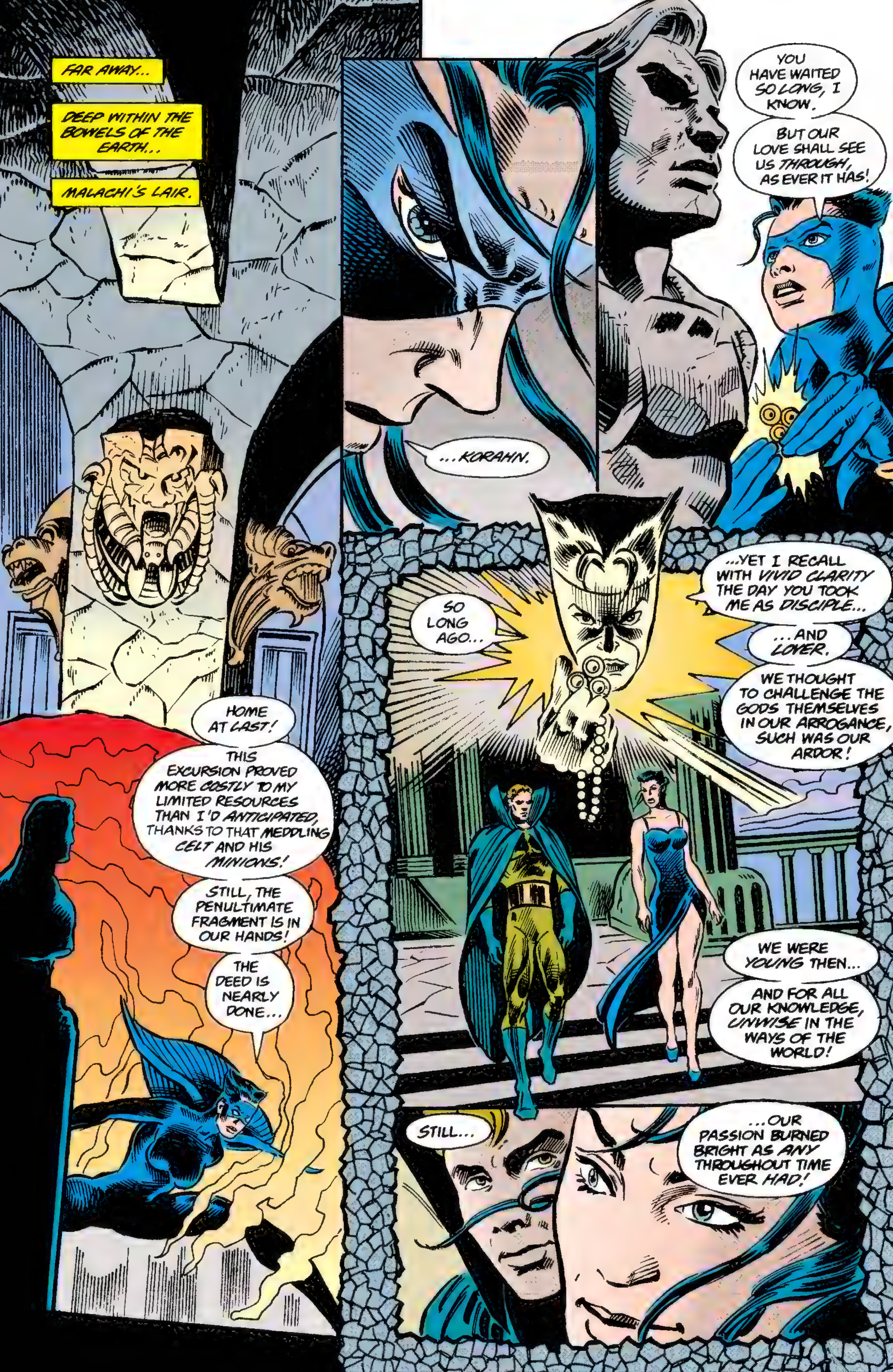

BOOOOOOORING!
LESS TALK, MORE ACTION, JACKSON!
SSSHRAAKTT!
CAN'T SAY I MUCH CARE IF YOU GET WHACKED OR NOT...
...'CEPT THE WAY THINGS 'RE GOING, I'LL BE THE GUY WHO GETS STUCK LUGGING YOUR TWO-TON CARCASS TO THE MORGUE!
SAY, THESE GINSU KNIVES REALLY DO STAY SHARP SLICE AFTER SLICE!
THAT ATTITUDE DOESN'T SURPRISE ME, 'POOL!
'BOUT WHAT I'D EXPECT...
...FROM A MONEY-GRUBBING LOWLIFE LIKE YOU!
THOOM!
MONEY-GRUBBING?
WELL, RIDDLE ME THIS, "HERO"...
HOW MUCH DID DRUID PAY YOU TO SIGN UP?
MY SHADOW-POWERS ARE WORTHLESS AGAINST THESE THINGS!
BIG SURPRISE.
WE'D BETTER COME UP WITH A GAME PLAN FAST...
...OR WE'LL BE THE ONES HANGING ON THE WALLS!

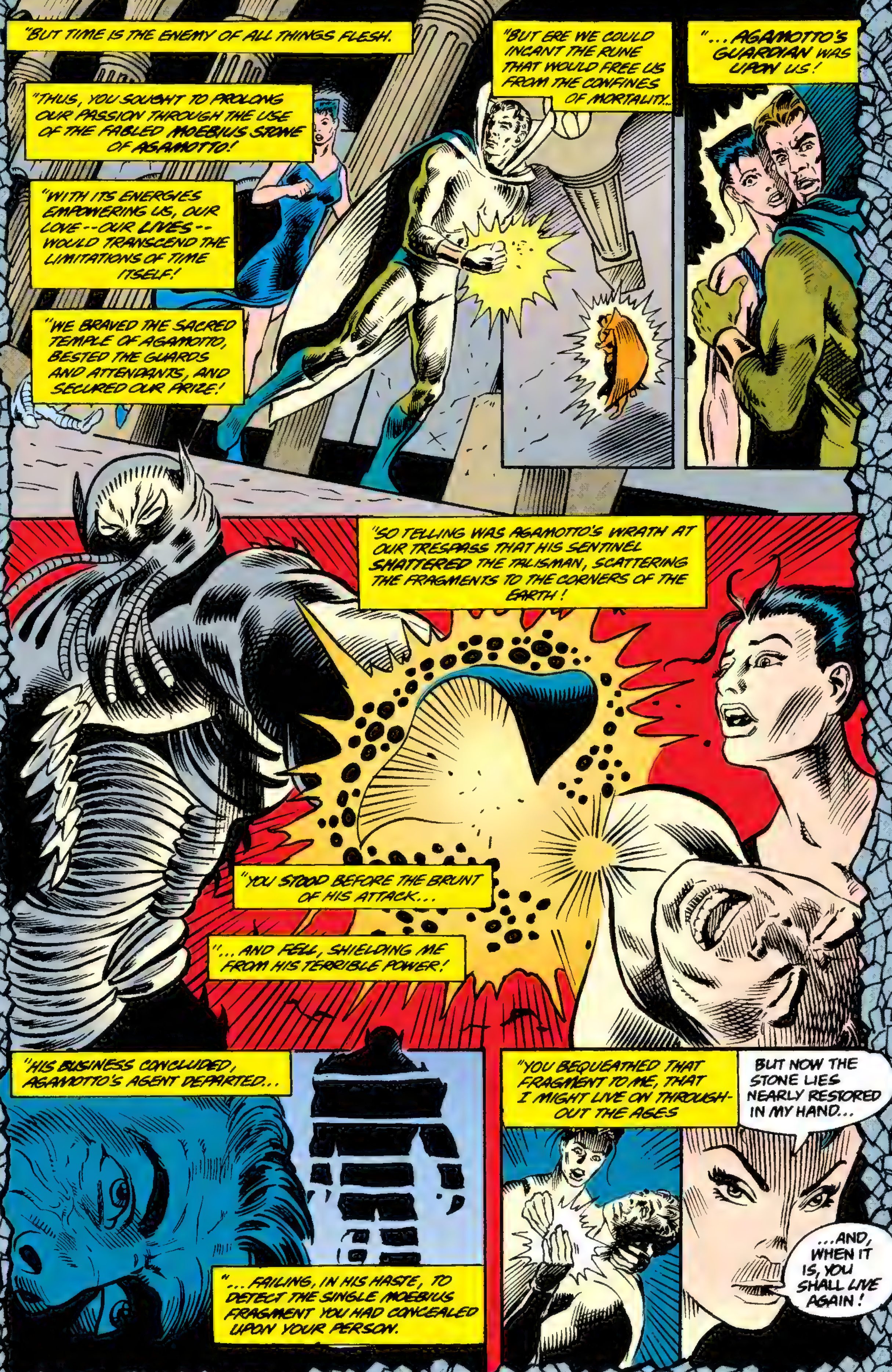

I'LL GIVE HER *THIS*: THE SHADY LADY'S GOT *GUTS*!
GRANTED, THEY'RE ABOUT TO DECORATE THE ARCHITECTURE!
YEAH.
UNLIKE THAT TURNCOAT *BOYFRIEND* OF HERS!
I GET MY HANDS ON THAT *BACK-STABBIN' JUDAS*...
...HE'S GONNA *FEEL* THE WAY THESE GUYS *LOOK*!
WHATSAMATTA, CAGE?
'FRAID HIS CHECK'LL BOUNCE?
THAT'S WHY I TAKE *AMERICAN EXPRESS*!
YOU DO ME A *DISSERVICE*, LUKE CAGE!
WHEN MALACHI'S ATTACK COMMENCED, I MERELY RENDERED MYSELF *IMMUNE* TO *DETECTION*!
HERE, HOVERING UNOBSERVED ABOVE THE MELEE, I MIGHT BETTER DISCERN THE *TRUE* NATURE OF OUR PERIL!
AS I SUSPECTED...
...EVEN WITH THE GREATER PORTION OF THE *MOEBIUS STONE* AT HER DISPOSAL, MALACHI'S STORE OF SURPLUS MYSTIC ENERGY WAS *INSUFFICIENT* TO EFFECT A TRUE CORPOREAL MANIFESTATION OF THESE MASTERWORKS!
WHAT MY ALLIES CONTEND WITH IS LITTLE MORE THAN LIGHT AND SHADOW, AN ODDITY OF *PERCEPTION*--

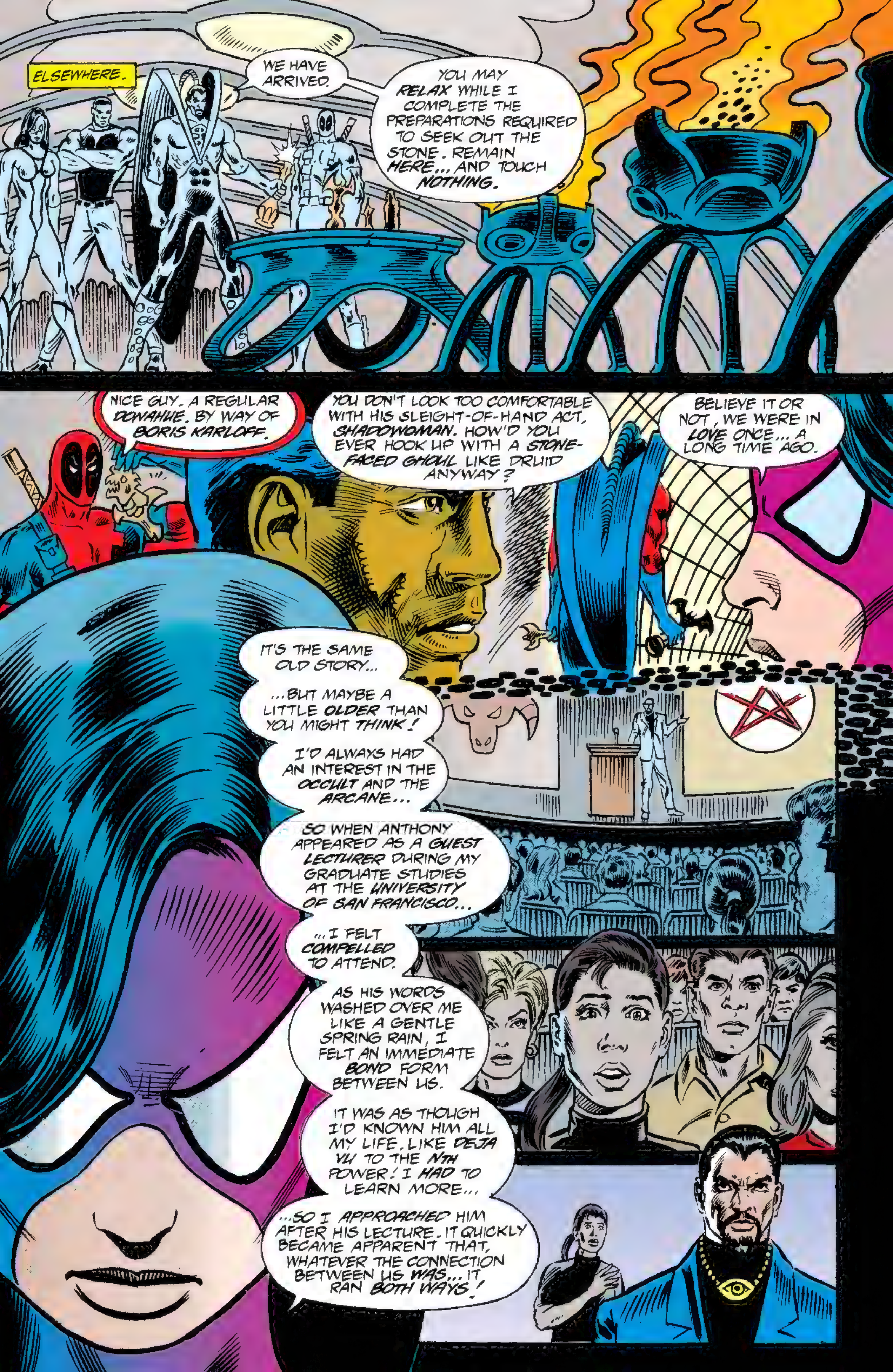

--ONE WELL WITHIN JILLIAN'S ABILITY TO CORRECT!
SHADOWOMAN! CAST YOUR SHADOW-SELF WIDE ABOUT THE ROOM! YOU MUST OBFUSCATE THE WALLS AND PEDESTALS WHERE THE OBJECTS D'ART ONCE STOOD!
ANTHONY!
THEN YOU ARE STILL HERE!
I'LL DO AS YOU SAY...
...BUT I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME SEE HOW THAT'LL HELP!
THE FOES WE FACE POSSESS NO INHERENT SUBSTANCE! THEY ARE MERELY SOLID ILLUSIONS!
AND, IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER THAT A HOLOGRAM WILL VANISH IF THE LASER BEAM WHICH FORMS IT IS BROKEN...
...SO, TOO, WILL THESE CREATURES DISSIPATE ONCE THE SOURCE OF THEIR UNLIFE IS OBSCURED!
THEY'RE GONE!
JUST WAFTED AWAY!
YEAH.
CHEECH AND CHONG'D BE RIGHT PROUD!

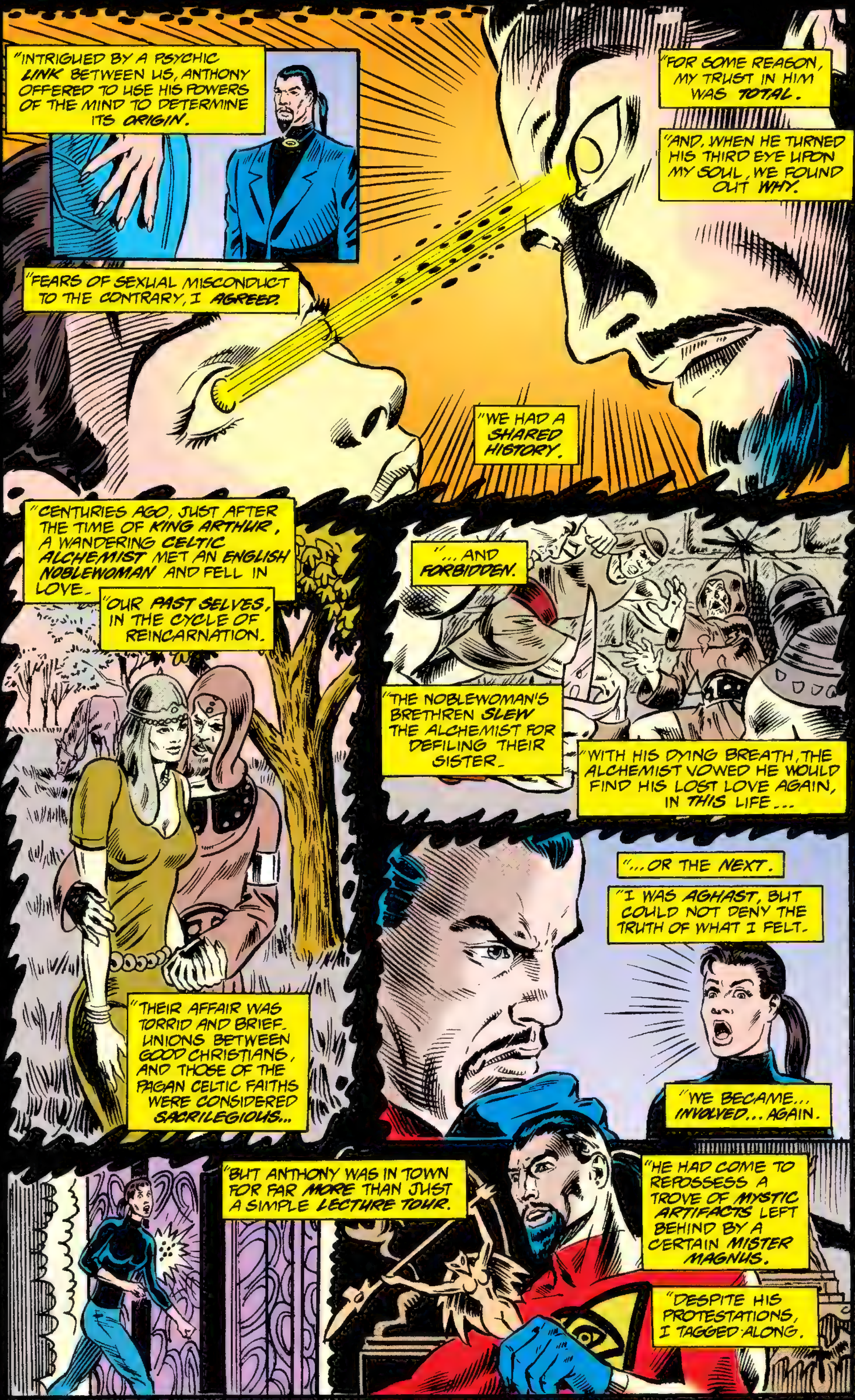

IF THAT'S THE CASE, ANTHONY, THEN WE WERE NEVER IN ANY REAL DANGER, WERE WE?
ON THE CONTRARY.
MALACHI'S MINIONS WERE MEANT ONLY TO DELAY US...
BUT THEY WERE QUITE CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT THEIR LETHAL INTENTIONS.
I TRUST YOU ALL WILL HAVE MORE FAITH IN ME HENCE!
THE SORCERESS HAS MADE GOOD HER ESCAPE.
EEOOEEEOOE
AND WHERE SHE HAS GONE, WE MUST FOLLOW.
HAVING MADE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH THE MOEBIUS FRAGMENT, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRACE ITS MYSTIC EMMINATIONS!
EEOOEEEOOEEEOO
BUT FIRST, WE SHALL RETURN TO MY TOWN-HOUSE!
THE ANCIENT CELTIC POWER HELD WITHIN THESE ARTIFACTS SHALL EFFECT OUR TRANSPORT!
CRANK IT UP, DOC!
SSHRAK
WE'VE BEEN LETTIN' THIS ALARM SOUND ALMOST SINCE WE GOT HERE!
AND EVEN CHI-TOWN'S FINEST'LL SHOW UP SOONER OR LATER!
STEP BACK, MISTER!
I JUST LOST ONE HEIRLOOM! I AIN'T ABOUT TO LET YOU START MONKEYIN' AROUND WITH--
MR. CAGE, YOUR SERVICES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED IN THIS AFFAIR. YOU ARE DISMISSED.
YOUR FEE HAS ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED TO THE OFFICES OF THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR!
I'D MAKE HASTE, WERE I YOU.
THE AUTHORITIES FROWN UPON EX-CONVICTS BEING FOUND AT THE SITE OF A BREAK-IN!
FORGET IT, DRUID! YOU'RE NOT GIVIN' ME THE BRUSH-OFF THAT EASILY!
TILL WE GET THE MUSEUM'S ROCK BACK, I'M ON YOU LIKE CHEWIN' GUM TO THE CHEAP SEATS!
AS YOU WILL, MR. CAGE.

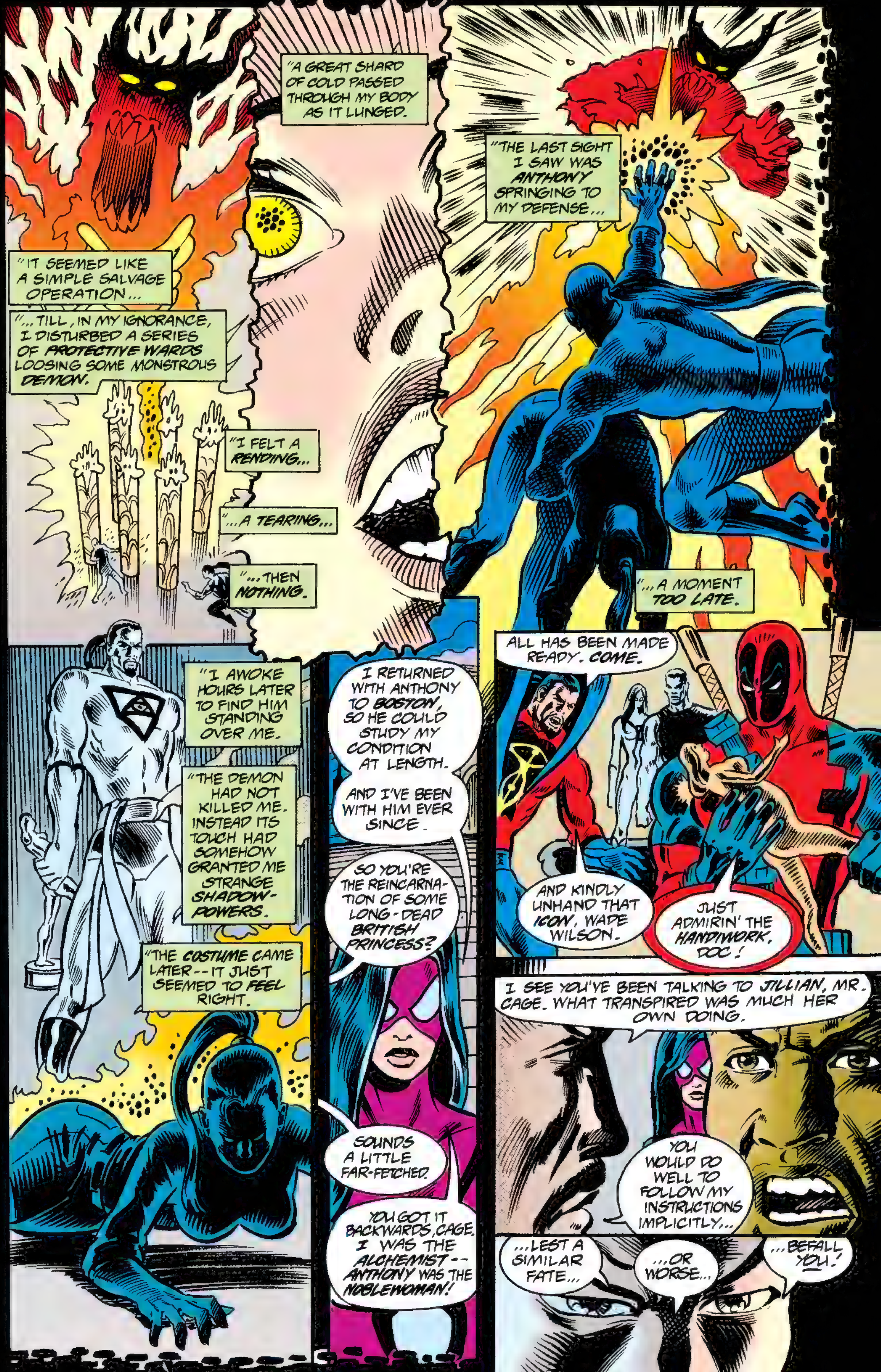

FEAR NOT. I'VE NO INTENTION OF *PURLOINING* THESE HOLY RELICS.
WE NEED BUT STAND WITHIN THE CIRCLE I'VE LAID OUT WHILE I MOUTH THE CHANT OF *TRANSUBSTANTIATION!*
HEY, EASY WITH THAT *MAGIC* STUFF, DOC!
YOURS TRULY GETS QUEASY WATCHIN' *BULLWINKLE* TRY TO PULL A *RABBIT* OUTTA HIS *HAT!*
FREEZE!
ALL OF YOU, RAISE 'EM...
...HIGH?
WHAT THE BLAZES JUST *HAPPENED* HERE, MURPH?
COULDN'T *SAY*, PARTNER!
ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT WE'VE GOT ONE *DANDY* STORY FOR THE ENQUIRER!
BUT I DOUBT THE CAPTAIN IS GOING TO *BELIEVE* IT!

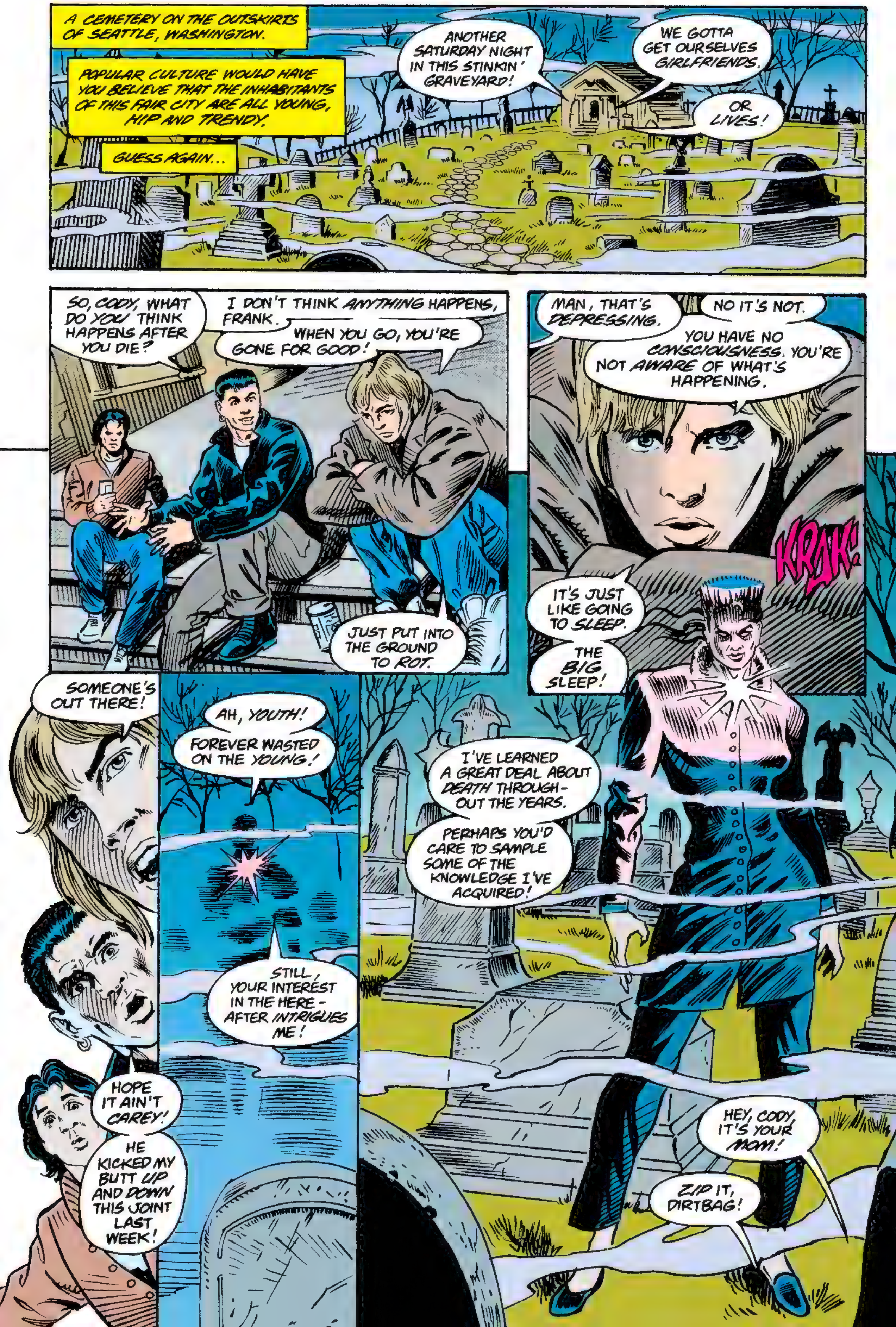

FAR AWAY...
DEEP WITHIN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH...
MALACHI'S LAIR.
HOME AT LAST!
THIS EXCURSION PROVED MORE COSTLY TO MY LIMITED RESOURCES THAN I'D ANTICIPATED, THANKS TO THAT MEDDLING CELT AND HIS MINIONS!
STILL, THE PENULTIMATE FRAGMENT IS IN OUR HANDS!
THE DEED IS NEARLY DONE...
...KORAHN.
YOU HAVE WAITED SO LONG, I KNOW.
BUT OUR LOVE SHALL SEE US THROUGH, AS EVER IT HAS!
SO LONG AGO...
...YET I RECALL WITH VIVID CLARITY THE DAY YOU TOOK ME AS DISCIPLE...
...AND LOVER.
WE THOUGHT TO CHALLENGE THE GODS THEMSELVES IN OUR ARROGANCE, SUCH WAS OUR ARDOR!
WE WERE YOUNG THEN...
AND FOR ALL OUR KNOWLEDGE, UNWISE IN THE WAYS OF THE WORLD!
STILL...
...OUR PASSION BURNED BRIGHT AS ANY THROUGHOUT TIME EVER HAD!

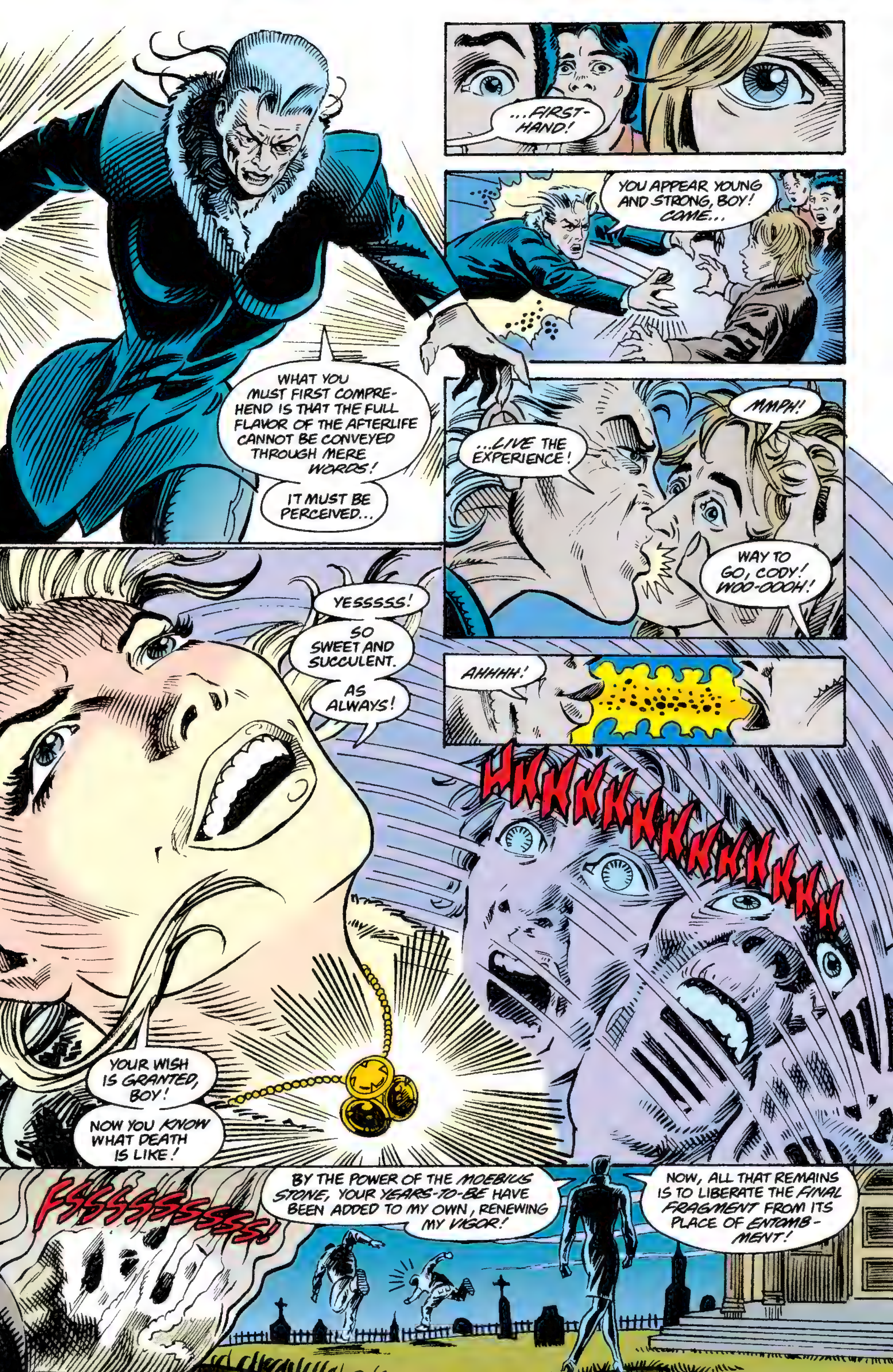

"BUT TIME IS THE ENEMY OF ALL THINGS FLESH.
"THUS, YOU SOUGHT TO PROLONG OUR PASSION THROUGH THE USE OF THE FABLED MOEBIUS STONE OF AGAMOTTO!
"WITH ITS ENERGIES EMPOWERING US, OUR LOVE--OUR LIVES--WOULD TRANSCEND THE LIMITATIONS OF TIME ITSELF!
"WE BRAVED THE SACRED TEMPLE OF AGAMOTTO, BESTED THE GUARDS AND ATTENDANTS, AND SECURED OUR PRIZE!
"BUT ERE WE COULD INCANT THE RUNE THAT WOULD FREE US FROM THE CONFINES OF MORTALITY...
"...AGAMOTTO'S GUARDIAN WAS UPON US!
"SO TELLING WAS AGAMOTTO'S WRATH AT OUR TRESPASS THAT HIS SENTINEL SHATTERED THE TALISMAN, SCATTERING THE FRAGMENTS TO THE CORNERS OF THE EARTH!
"YOU STOOD BEFORE THE BRUNT OF HIS ATTACK...
"...AND FELL, SHIELDING ME FROM HIS TERRIBLE POWER!
"HIS BUSINESS CONCLUDED, AGAMOTTO'S AGENT DEPARTED...
"...FAILING, IN HIS HASTE, TO DETECT THE SINGLE MOEBIUS FRAGMENT YOU HAD CONCEALED UPON YOUR PERSON.
"YOU BEQUEATHED THAT FRAGMENT TO ME, THAT I MIGHT LIVE ON THROUGHOUT THE AGES
BUT NOW THE STONE LIES NEARLY RESTORED IN MY HAND...
...AND, WHEN IT IS, YOU SHALL LIVE AGAIN!

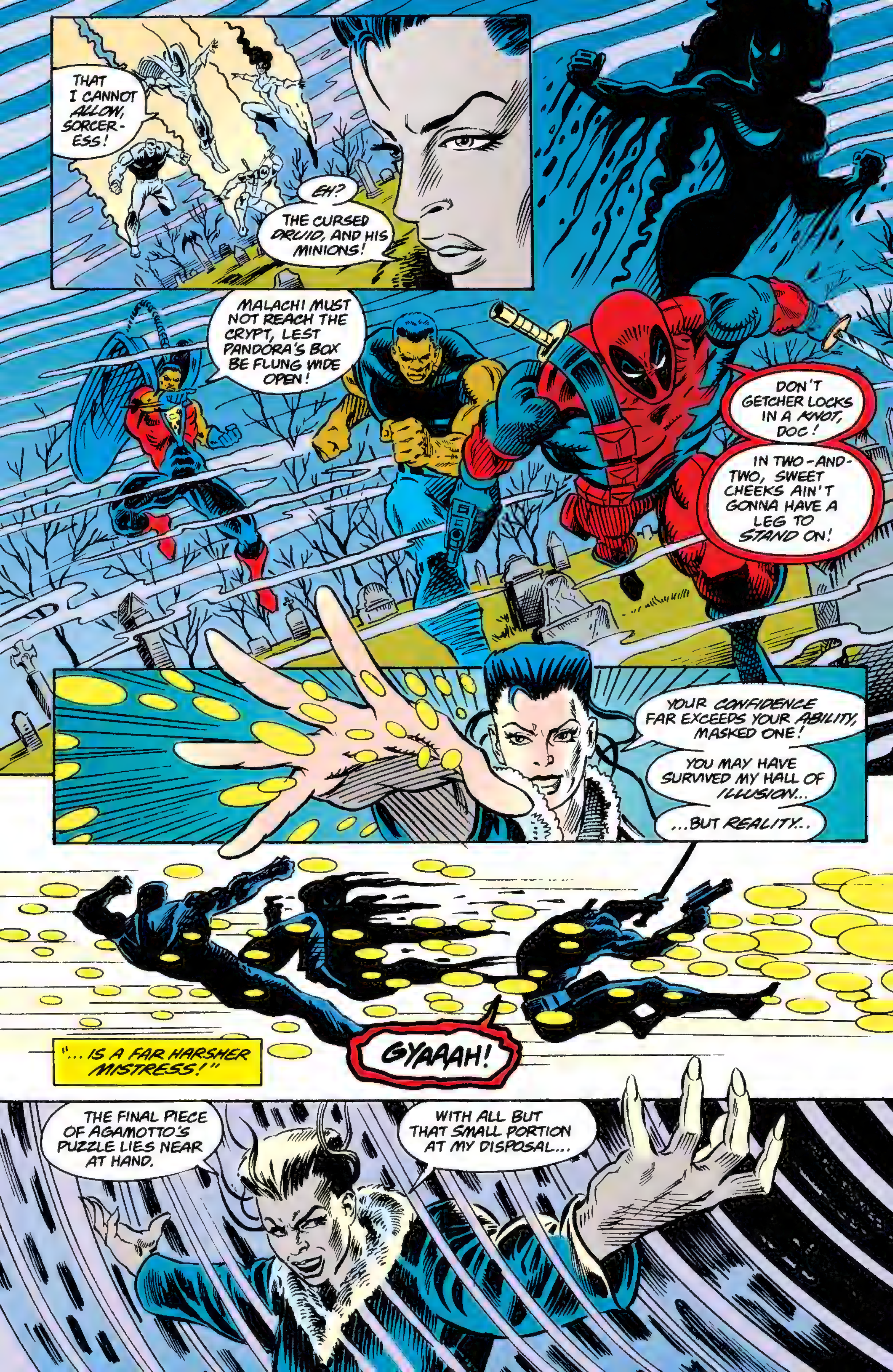

ELSEWHERE.
WE HAVE ARRIVED.
YOU MAY *RELAX* WHILE I COMPLETE THE PREPARATIONS REQUIRED TO SEEK OUT THE STONE. REMAIN *HERE*... AND TOUCH *NOTHING*.
NICE GUY. A REGULAR *DONAHUE*. BY WAY OF *BORIS KARLOFF*.
YOU DON'T LOOK TOO COMFORTABLE WITH HIS SLEIGHT-OF-HAND ACT, *SHADOWOMAN*. HOW'D YOU EVER HOOK UP WITH A *STONE-FACED GHOUL* LIKE DRUID ANYWAY?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE WERE IN *LOVE* ONCE... A LONG TIME AGO.
IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY...
...BUT MAYBE A LITTLE *OLDER* THAN YOU MIGHT *THINK*!
I'D ALWAYS HAD AN INTEREST IN THE *OCCULT* AND THE *ARCANE*...
SO WHEN ANTHONY APPEARED AS A *GUEST LECTURER* DURING MY GRADUATE STUDIES AT THE *UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO*...
...I FELT *COMPELLED* TO ATTEND.
AS HIS WORDS WASHED OVER ME LIKE A GENTLE SPRING RAIN, I FELT AN IMMEDIATE *BOND* FORM BETWEEN US.
IT WAS AS THOUGH I'D KNOWN HIM ALL MY LIFE, LIKE *DEJA VU* TO THE *NTH POWER*! I *HAD* TO LEARN MORE...
...SO I *APPROACHED* HIM AFTER HIS LECTURE. IT QUICKLY BECAME APPARENT THAT, WHATEVER THE CONNECTION BETWEEN US *WAS*... IT RAN *BOTH WAYS*!

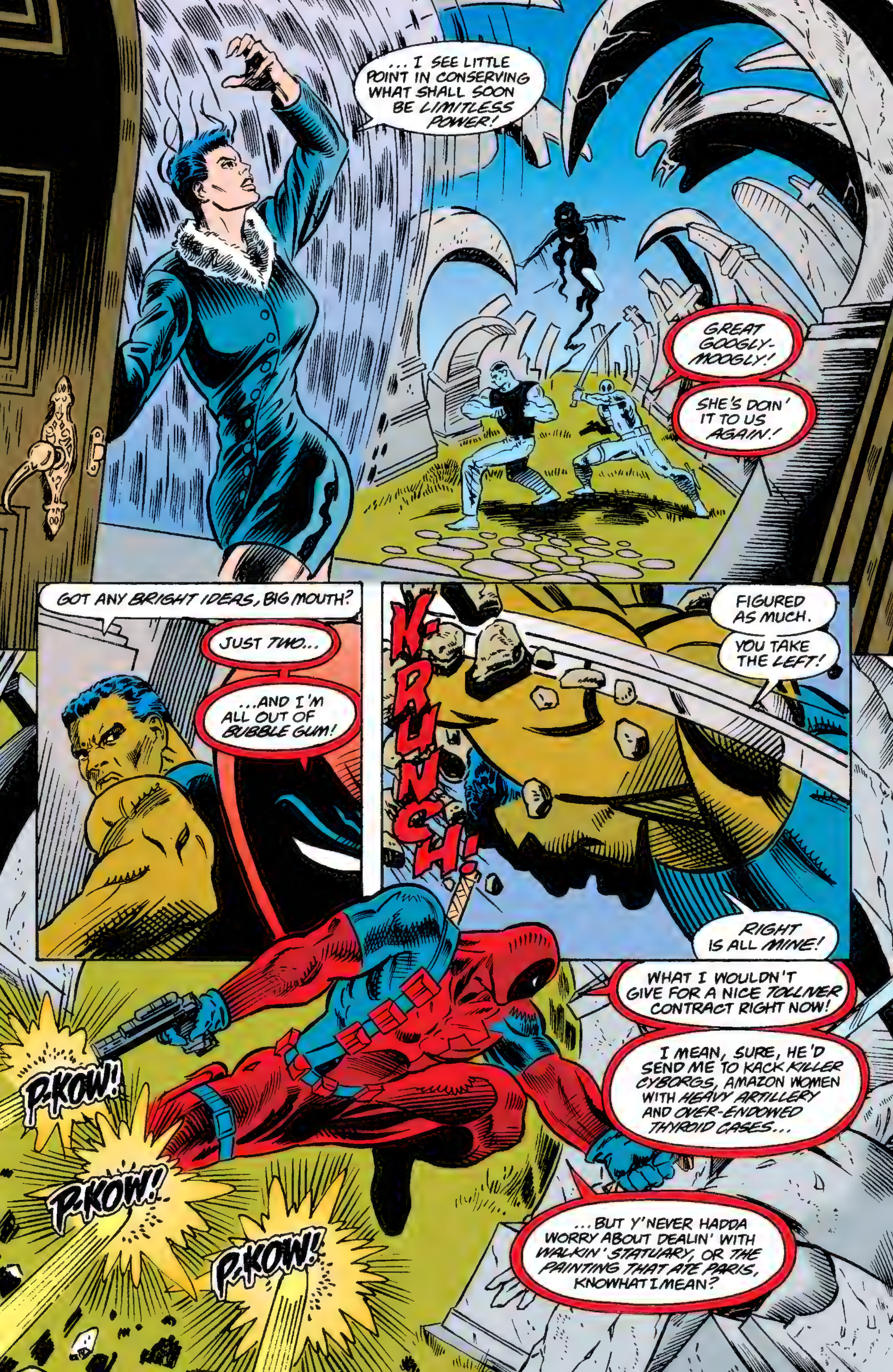

"INTRIGUED BY A PSYCHIC LINK BETWEEN US, ANTHONY OFFERED TO USE HIS POWERS OF THE MIND TO DETERMINE ITS ORIGIN.
"FEARS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT TO THE CONTRARY, I AGREED.
"FOR SOME REASON, MY TRUST IN HIM WAS TOTAL.
"AND, WHEN HE TURNED HIS THIRD EYE UPON MY SOUL, WE FOUND OUT WHY.
"WE HAD A SHARED HISTORY.
"CENTURIES AGO, JUST AFTER THE TIME OF KING ARTHUR, A WANDERING CELTIC ALCHEMIST MET AN ENGLISH NOBLEWOMAN AND FELL IN LOVE.
"OUR PAST SELVES, IN THE CYCLE OF REINCARNATION.
"THEIR AFFAIR WAS TORRID AND BRIEF. UNIONS BETWEEN GOOD CHRISTIANS, AND THOSE OF THE PAGAN CELTIC FAITHS WERE CONSIDERED SACRILEGIOUS...
"...AND FORBIDDEN.
"THE NOBLEWOMAN'S BRETHREN SLEW THE ALCHEMIST FOR DEFILING THEIR SISTER.
"WITH HIS DYING BREATH, THE ALCHEMIST VOWED HE WOULD FIND HIS LOST LOVE AGAIN, IN THIS LIFE...
"...OR THE NEXT.
"I WAS AGHAST, BUT COULD NOT DENY THE TRUTH OF WHAT I FELT.
"WE BECAME... INVOLVED... AGAIN.
"BUT ANTHONY WAS IN TOWN FOR FAR MORE THAN JUST A SIMPLE LECTURE TOUR.
"HE HAD COME TO REPOSSESS A TROVE OF MYSTIC ARTIFACTS LEFT BEHIND BY A CERTAIN MISTER MAGNUS.
"DESPITE HIS PROTESTATIONS, I TAGGED ALONG.

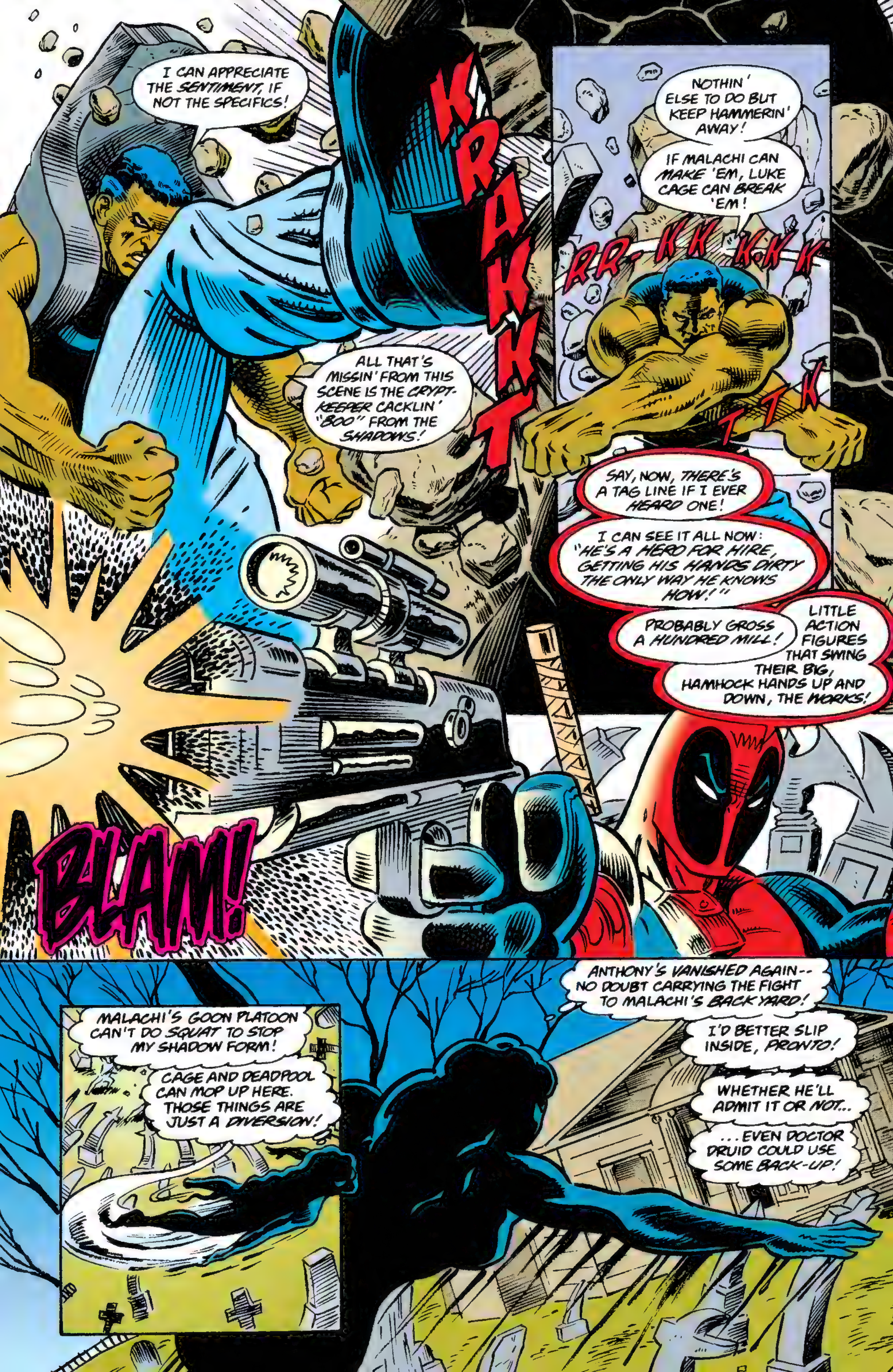

"A GREAT SHARD OF COLD PASSED THROUGH MY BODY AS IT LUNGED.
"THE LAST SIGHT I SAW WAS ANTHONY SPRINGING TO MY DEFENSE...
"IT SEEMED LIKE A SIMPLE SALVAGE OPERATION...
"...TILL, IN MY IGNORANCE, I DISTURBED A SERIES OF PROTECTIVE WARDS LOOSING SOME MONSTROUS DEMON.
"I FELT A RENDING...
"...A TEARING...
"...THEN NOTHING.
"...A MOMENT TOO LATE.
"I AWOKE HOURS LATER TO FIND HIM STANDING OVER ME.
"THE DEMON HAD NOT KILLED ME. INSTEAD ITS TOUCH HAD SOMEHOW GRANTED ME STRANGE SHADOW-POWERS.
"THE COSTUME CAME LATER--IT JUST SEEMED TO FEEL RIGHT.
I RETURNED WITH ANTHONY TO BOSTON, SO HE COULD STUDY MY CONDITION AT LENGTH.
AND I'VE BEEN WITH HIM EVER SINCE.
SO YOU'RE THE REINCARNATION OF SOME LONG-DEAD BRITISH PRINCESS?
SOUNDS A LITTLE FAR-FETCHED.
YOU GOT IT BACKWARDS, CAGE. I WAS THE ALCHEMIST--ANTHONY WAS THE NOBLEWOMAN!
ALL HAS BEEN MADE READY. COME.
AND KINDLY UNHAND THAT ICON, WADE WILSON.
JUST ADMIRIN' THE HANDIWORK, DOC!
I SEE YOU'VE BEEN TALKING TO JILLIAN, MR. CAGE. WHAT TRANSPIRED WAS MUCH HER OWN DOING.
YOU WOULD DO WELL TO FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS IMPLICITLY...
...LEST A SIMILAR FATE...
...OR WORSE...
...BEFALL YOU!

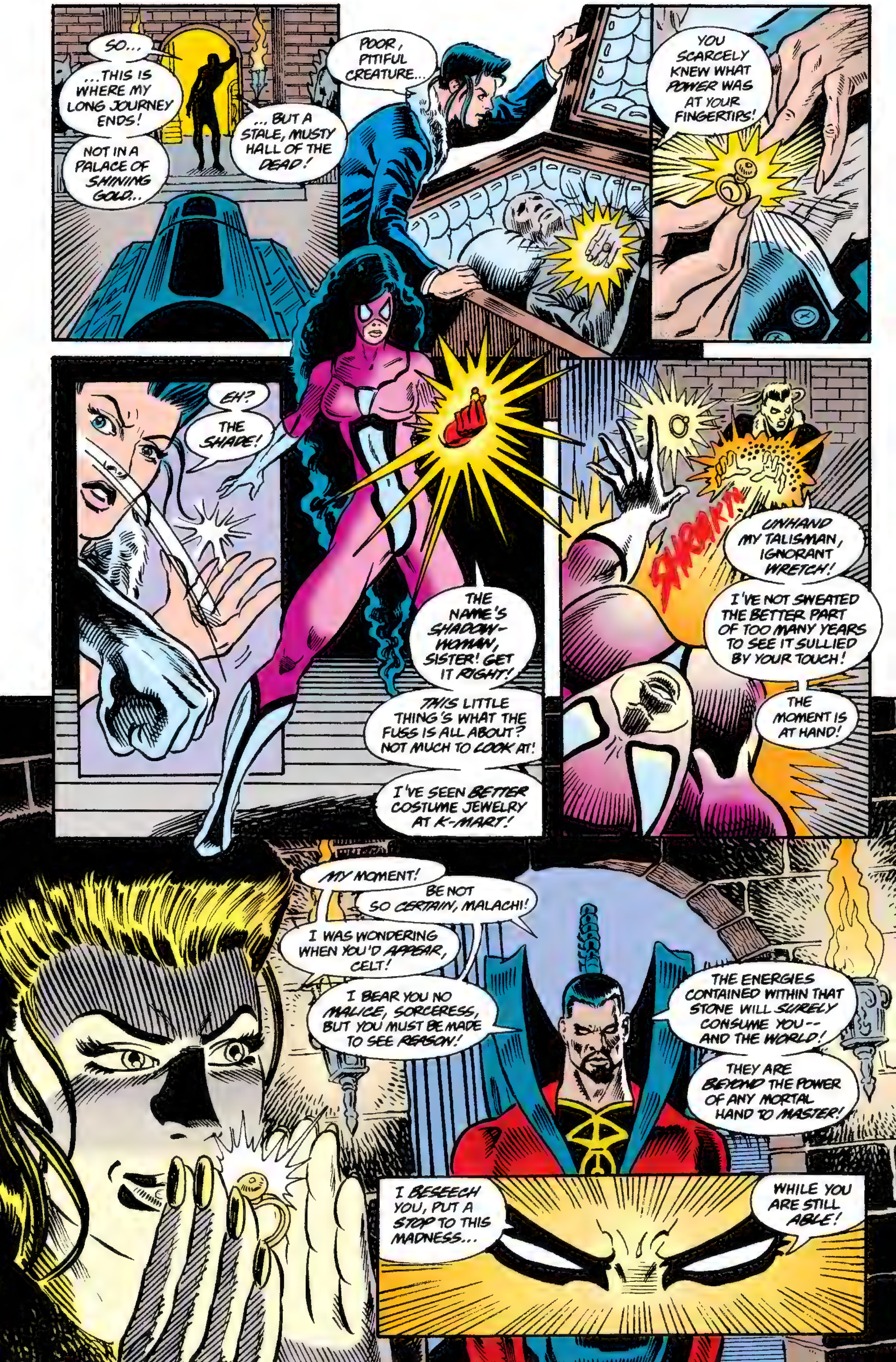

A CEMETERY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.
POPULAR CULTURE WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE THAT THE INHABITANTS OF THIS FAIR CITY ARE ALL YOUNG, HIP AND TRENDY.
GUESS AGAIN...
ANOTHER SATURDAY NIGHT IN THIS STINKIN' GRAVEYARD!
WE GOTTA GET OURSELVES GIRLFRIENDS.
OR LIVES!
SO, CODY, WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS AFTER YOU DIE?
I DON'T THINK ANYTHING HAPPENS, FRANK.
WHEN YOU GO, YOU'RE GONE FOR GOOD!
JUST PUT INTO THE GROUND TO ROT.
MAN, THAT'S DEPRESSING.
NO IT'S NOT.
YOU HAVE NO CONSCIOUSNESS. YOU'RE NOT AWARE OF WHAT'S HAPPENING.
IT'S JUST LIKE GOING TO SLEEP.
THE BIG SLEEP!
KRAK!
SOMEONE'S OUT THERE!
HOPE IT AIN'T CAREY!
HE KICKED MY BUTT UP AND DOWN THIS JOINT LAST WEEK!
AH, YOUTH!
FOREVER WASTED ON THE YOUNG!
STILL, YOUR INTEREST IN THE HERE-AFTER INTRIGUES ME!
I'VE LEARNED A GREAT DEAL ABOUT DEATH THROUGH-OUT THE YEARS.
PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO SAMPLE SOME OF THE KNOWLEDGE I'VE ACQUIRED!
HEY, CODY, IT'S YOUR MOM!
ZIP IT, DIRTBAG!

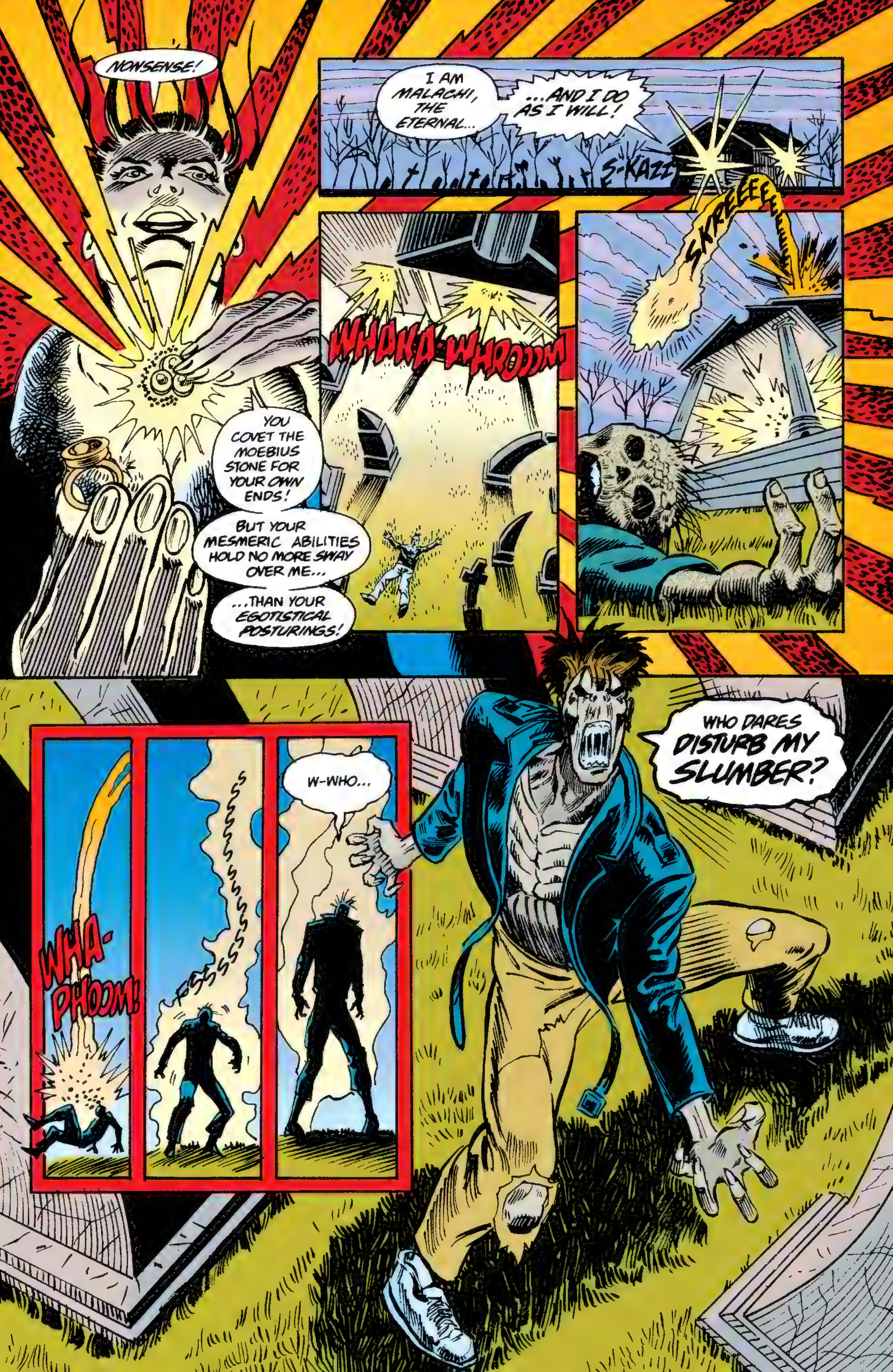

...FIRST-HAND!
YOU APPEAR YOUNG AND STRONG, BOY! COME...
WHAT YOU MUST FIRST COMPREHEND IS THAT THE FULL FLAVOR OF THE AFTERLIFE CANNOT BE CONVEYED THROUGH MERE WORDS!
IT MUST BE PERCEIVED...
...LIVE THE EXPERIENCE!
MMPH!
WAY TO GO, CODY! WOO-OOOH!
YESSSSS!
SO SWEET AND SUCCULENT.
AS ALWAYS!
AHHHH!
HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
YOUR WISH IS GRANTED, BOY!
NOW YOU KNOW WHAT DEATH IS LIKE!
FSSSSSSSSSS!
BY THE POWER OF THE MOEBIUS STONE, YOUR YEARS-TO-BE HAVE BEEN ADDED TO MY OWN, RENEWING MY VIGOR!
NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO LIBERATE THE FINAL FRAGMENT FROM ITS PLACE OF ENTOMBMENT!

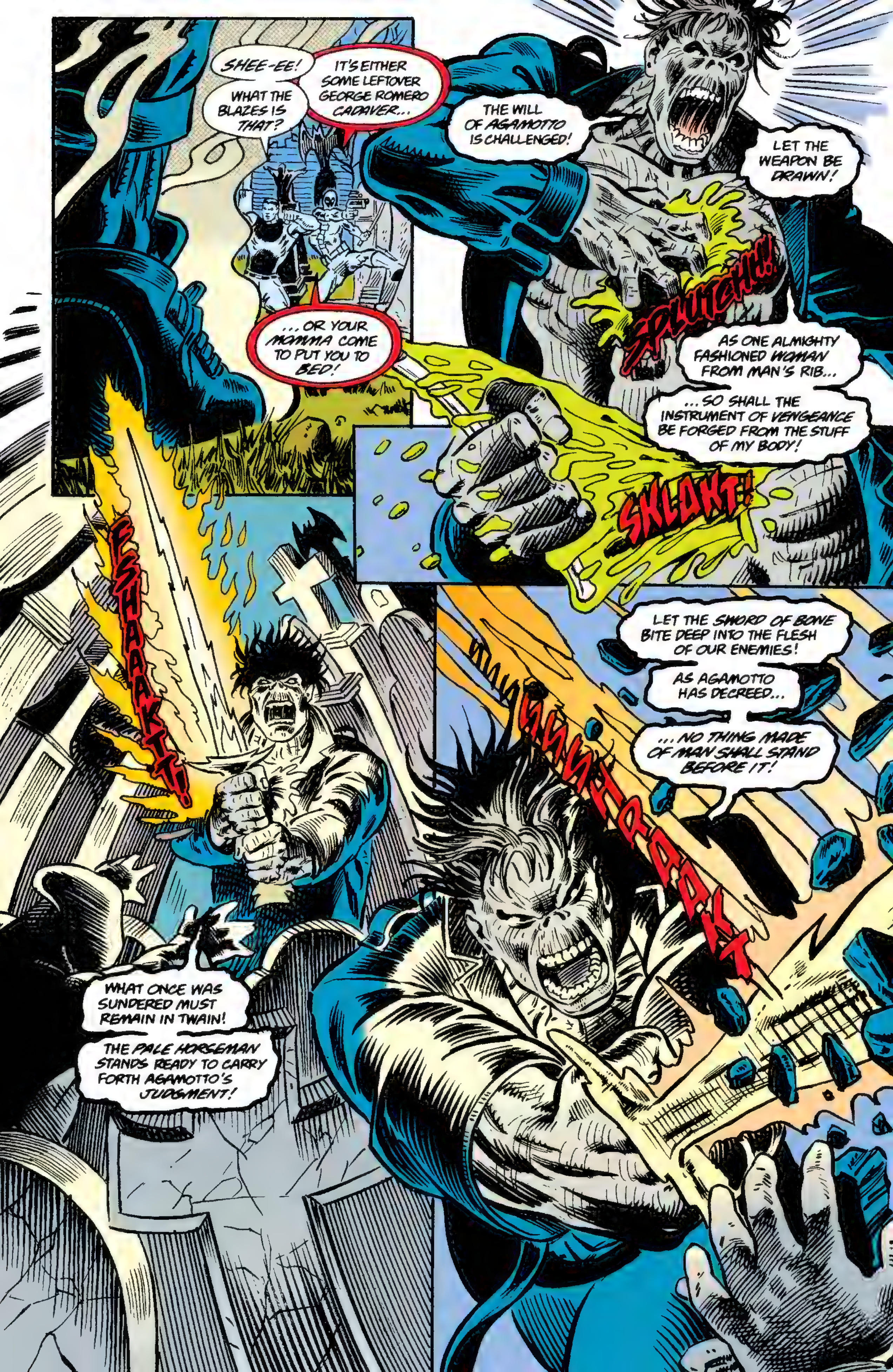

THAT I CANNOT *ALLOW*, SORCERESS!
EH?
THE CURSED *DRUID*, AND HIS MINIONS!
MALACHI MUST NOT REACH THE CRYPT, LEST PANDORA'S BOX BE FLUNG WIDE OPEN!
DON'T GETCHER LOCKS IN A *KNOT*, DOC!
IN TWO-AND-TWO, SWEET CHEEKS AIN'T GONNA HAVE A LEG TO *STAND ON!*
YOUR *CONFIDENCE* FAR EXCEEDS YOUR *ABILITY*, MASKED ONE!
YOU MAY HAVE SURVIVED MY HALL OF *ILLUSION*...
...BUT *REALITY*...
GYAAAH!
"...IS A FAR HARSHER MISTRESS!"
THE FINAL PIECE OF AGAMOTTO'S PUZZLE LIES NEAR AT HAND.
WITH ALL BUT THAT SMALL PORTION AT MY DISPOSAL...

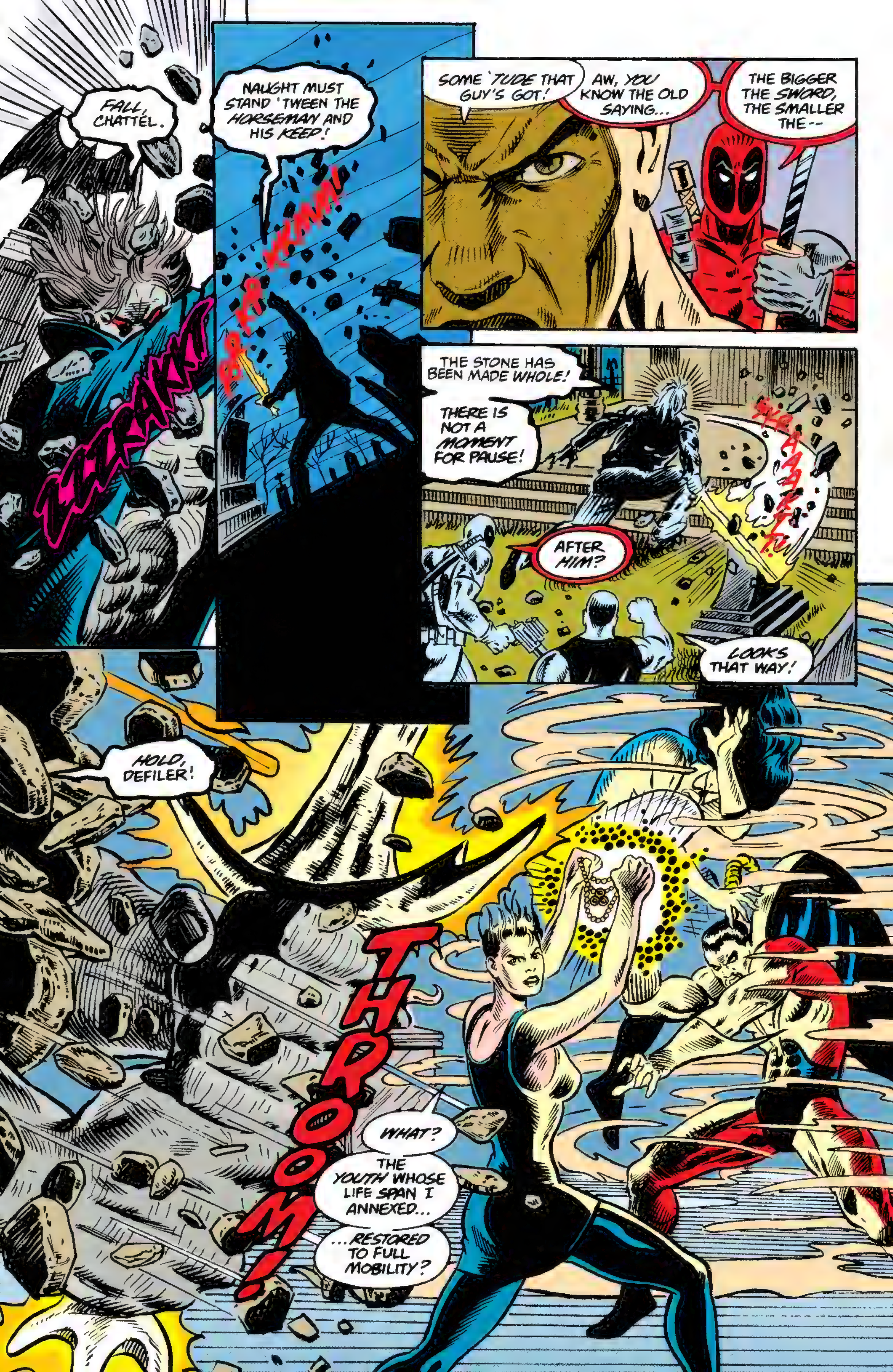

...I SEE LITTLE POINT IN CONSERVING WHAT SHALL SOON BE *LIMITLESS POWER!*
GREAT GOOGLY-MOOGLY!
SHE'S DOIN' IT TO US *AGAIN!*
GOT ANY *BRIGHT IDEAS,* BIG MOUTH?
JUST *TWO...*
...AND I'M ALL OUT OF *BUBBLE GUM!*
KRUNCH!
FIGURED AS MUCH.
YOU TAKE THE *LEFT!*
RIGHT IS ALL *MINE!*
WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE FOR A NICE *TOLLIVER* CONTRACT RIGHT NOW!
I MEAN, SURE, HE'D SEND ME TO KACK *KILLER CYBORGS,* AMAZON WOMEN WITH *HEAVY ARTILLERY* AND *OVER-ENDOWED THYROID CASES...*
P-KOW!
P-KOW!
P-KOW!
...BUT Y'NEVER HADDA WORRY ABOUT DEALIN' WITH *WALKIN' STATUARY,* OR *THE PAINTING THAT ATE PARIS,* KNOWHATIMEAN?

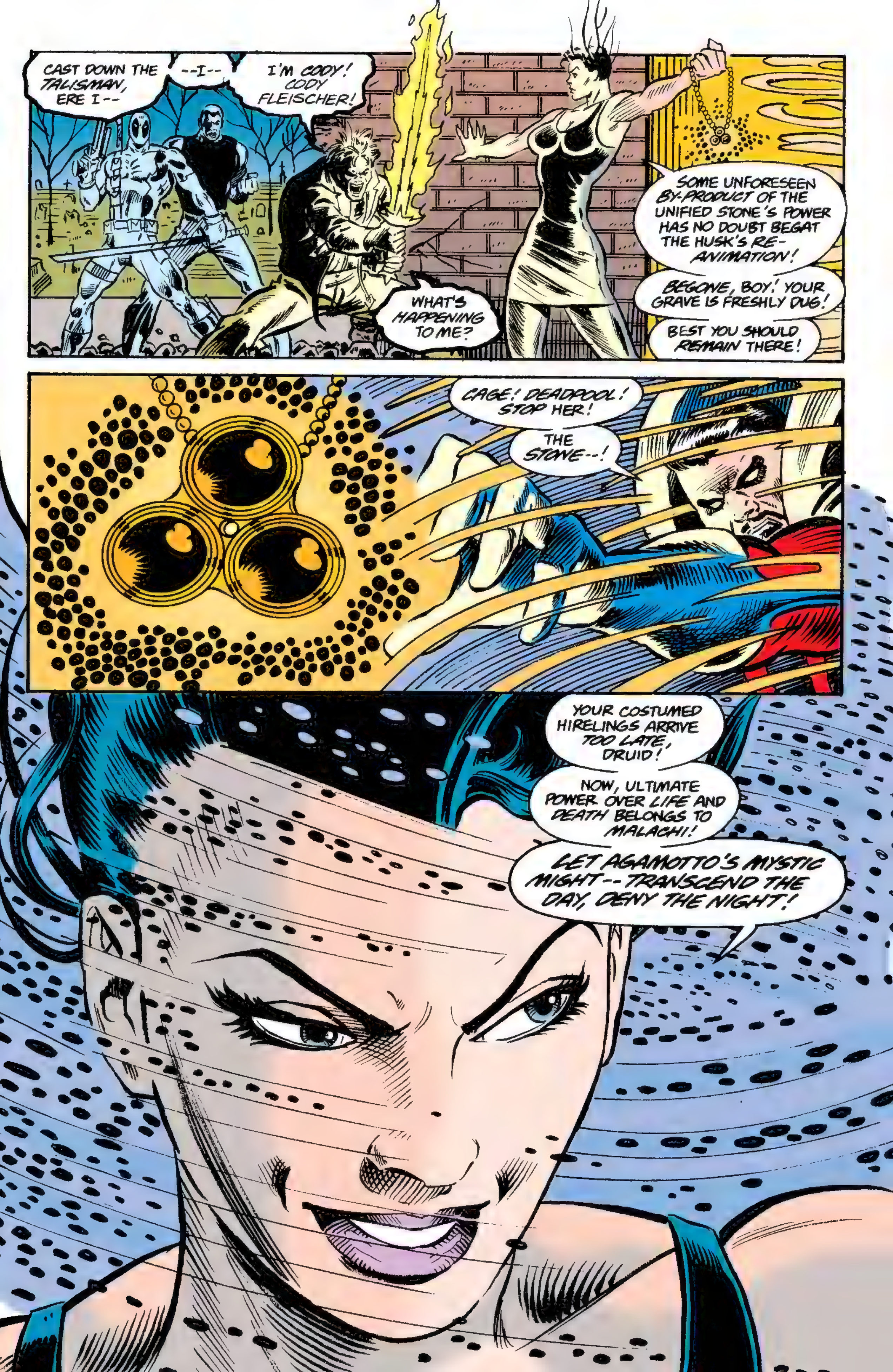

I CAN APPRECIATE THE *SENTIMENT*, IF NOT THE SPECIFICS!
KRAKT
NOTHIN' ELSE TO DO BUT KEEP HAMMERIN' AWAY!
IF MALACHI CAN *MAKE* 'EM, LUKE CAGE CAN *BREAK* 'EM!
RR-KK KKK
TTK
ALL THAT'S MISSIN' FROM THIS SCENE IS THE *CRYPT-KEEPER* CACKLIN' *"BOO"* FROM THE *SHADOWS!*
SAY, NOW, *THERE'S* A TAG LINE IF I EVER *HEARD* ONE!
I CAN SEE IT ALL NOW: *"HE'S A HERO FOR HIRE, GETTING HIS HANDS DIRTY THE ONLY WAY HE KNOWS HOW!"*
PROBABLY GROSS A *HUNDRED MILL!*
LITTLE ACTION FIGURES THAT SWING THEIR BIG, HAMHOCK HANDS UP AND DOWN, THE *WORKS!*
BLAM!
MALACHI'S GOON PLATOON CAN'T DO *SQUAT* TO STOP MY SHADOW FORM!
CAGE AND DEADPOOL CAN MOP UP HERE. THOSE THINGS ARE JUST A *DIVERSION!*
ANTHONY'S *VANISHED AGAIN*-- NO DOUBT CARRYING THE FIGHT TO MALACHI'S *BACK YARD!*
I'D BETTER SLIP INSIDE, *PRONTO!*
WHETHER HE'LL ADMIT IT OR *NOT*...
...EVEN DOCTOR DRUID COULD USE SOME *BACK-UP!*

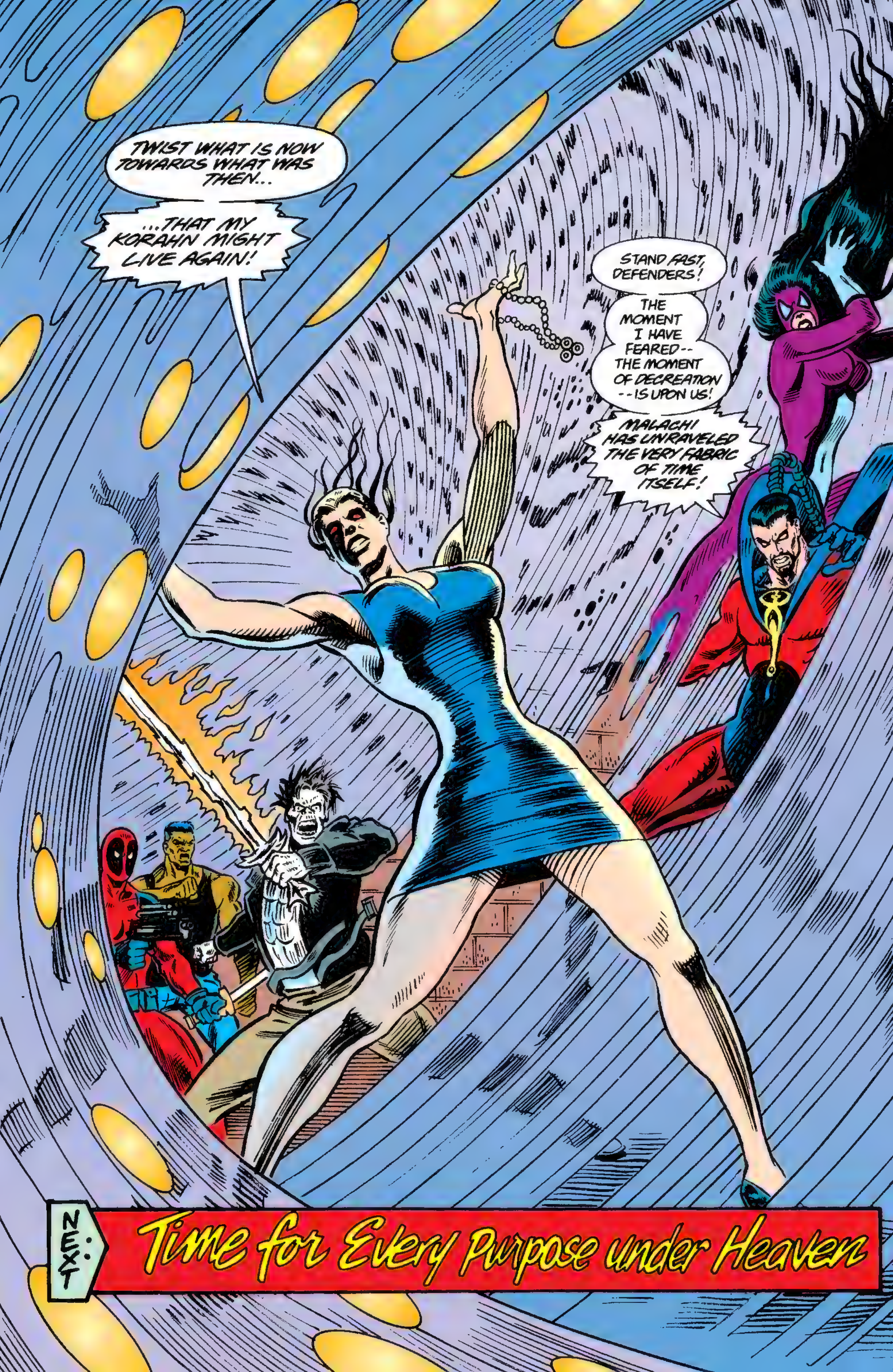

SO...
...THIS IS WHERE MY LONG JOURNEY ENDS!
NOT IN A PALACE OF SHINING GOLD...
...BUT A STALE, MUSTY HALL OF THE DEAD!
POOR, PITIFUL CREATURE...
YOU SCARCELY KNEW WHAT POWER WAS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!
EH? THE SHADE!
THE NAME'S SHADOW-WOMAN, SISTER! GET IT RIGHT!
THIS LITTLE THING'S WHAT THE FUSS IS ALL ABOUT? NOT MUCH TO LOOK AT!
I'VE SEEN BETTER COSTUME JEWELRY AT K-MART!
SHRAAKK!
UNHAND MY TALISMAN, IGNORANT WRETCH!
I'VE NOT SWEATED THE BETTER PART OF TOO MANY YEARS TO SEE IT SULLIED BY YOUR TOUCH!
THE MOMENT IS AT HAND!
MY MOMENT!
BE NOT SO CERTAIN, MALACHI!
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D APPEAR, CELT!
I BEAR YOU NO MALICE, SORCERESS, BUT YOU MUST BE MADE TO SEE REASON!
THE ENERGIES CONTAINED WITHIN THAT STONE WILL SURELY CONSUME YOU-- AND THE WORLD!
THEY ARE BEYOND THE POWER OF ANY MORTAL HAND TO MASTER!
I BESEECH YOU, PUT A STOP TO THIS MADNESS...
WHILE YOU ARE STILL ABLE!

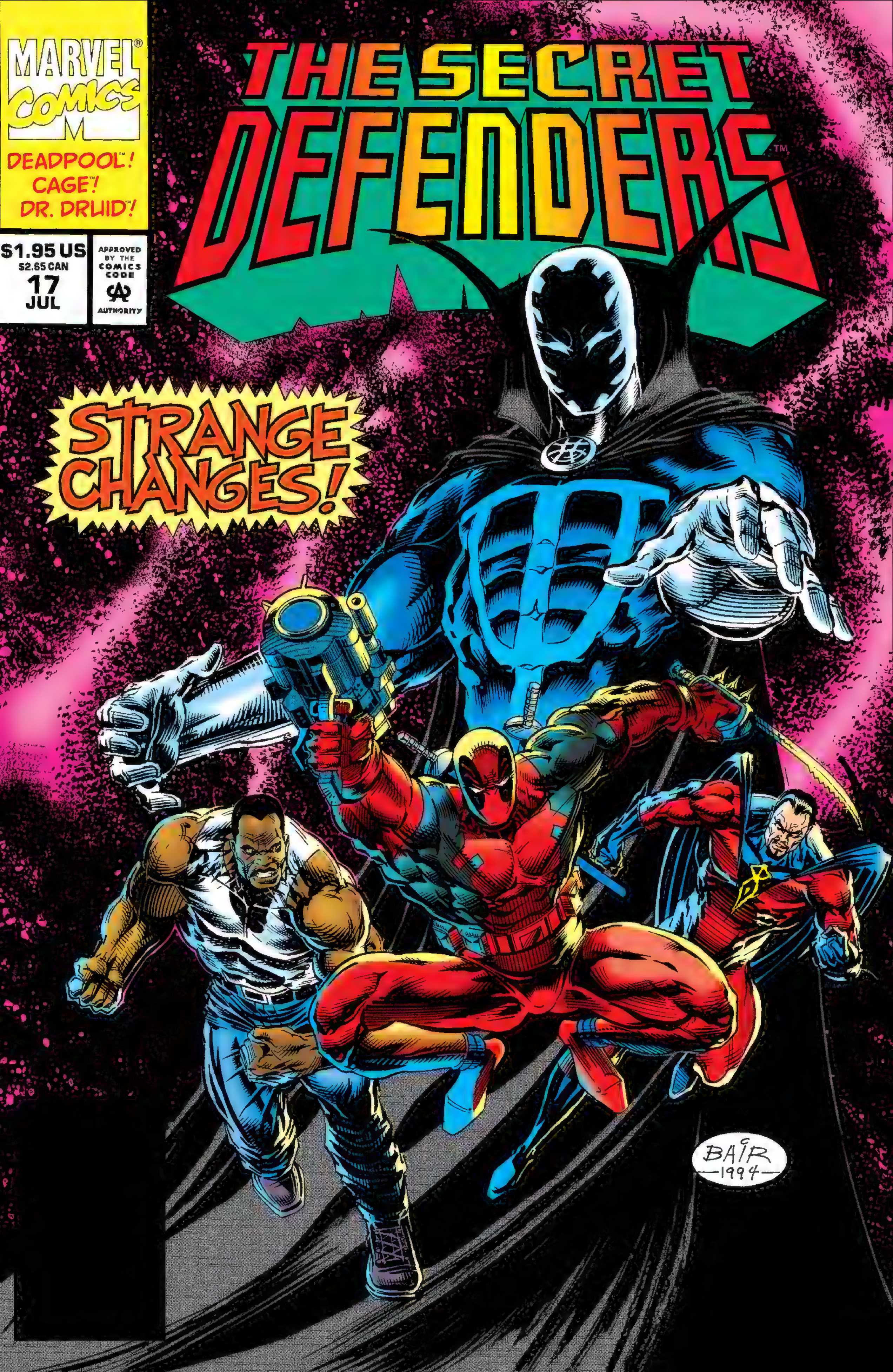

NONSENSE!
I AM MALACHI, THE ETERNAL...
...AND I DO AS I WILL!
S-KAZZ
SKREEEEE
YOU COVET THE MOEBIUS STONE FOR YOUR OWN ENDS!
BUT YOUR MESMERIC ABILITIES HOLD NO MORE SWAY OVER ME...
...THAN YOUR EGOTISTICAL POSTURINGS!
WHAKA-WHROOOM
WHA-PHOOM!
FSSSSSSSSSSSS
W-WHO...
WHO DARES DISTURB MY SLUMBER?


SHEE-EE!
WHAT THE BLAZES IS THAT?
IT'S EITHER SOME LEFTOVER GEORGE ROMERO CADAVER...
...OR YOUR MOMMA COME TO PUT YOU TO BED!
THE WILL OF AGAMOTTO IS CHALLENGED!
LET THE WEAPON BE DRAWN!
SPLUTCH!!
AS ONE ALMIGHTY FASHIONED WOMAN FROM MAN'S RIB...
...SO SHALL THE INSTRUMENT OF VENGEANCE BE FORGED FROM THE STUFF OF MY BODY!
SHLAKT!
FSHAAAKT!
LET THE SWORD OF BONE BITE DEEP INTO THE FLESH OF OUR ENEMIES!
AS AGAMOTTO HAS DECREED...
...NO THING MADE OF MAN SHALL STAND BEFORE IT!
SSSHRAAKK
WHAT ONCE WAS SUNDERED MUST REMAIN IN TWAIN!
THE PALE HORSEMAN STANDS READY TO CARRY FORTH AGAMOTTO'S JUDGMENT!


FALL, CHATTEL.
ZZRAKK!
NAUGHT MUST STAND 'TWEEN THE HORSEMAN AND HIS KEEP!
SOME 'TUDE THAT GUY'S GOT!
AW, YOU KNOW THE OLD SAYING...
THE BIGGER THE SWORD, THE SMALLER THE--
THE STONE HAS BEEN MADE WHOLE!
THERE IS NOT A MOMENT FOR PAUSE!
AFTER HIM?
LOOKS THAT WAY!
HOLD, DEFILER!
THROOOM!
WHAT?
THE YOUTH WHOSE LIFE SPAN I ANNEXED...
...RESTORED TO FULL MOBILITY?


CAST DOWN THE TALISMAN, ERE I--
--I--
I'M CODY! CODY FLEISCHER!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
SOME UNFORESEEN BY-PRODUCT OF THE UNIFIED STONE'S POWER HAS NO DOUBT BEGAT THE HUSK'S RE-ANIMATION!
BEGONE, BOY! YOUR GRAVE IS FRESHLY DUG!
BEST YOU SHOULD REMAIN THERE!
CAGE! DEADPOOL! STOP HER!
THE STONE--!
YOUR COSTUMED HIRELINGS ARRIVE TOO LATE, DRUID!
NOW, ULTIMATE POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH BELONGS TO MALACHI!
LET AGAMOTTO'S MYSTIC MIGHT--TRANSCEND THE DAY, DENY THE NIGHT!


TWIST WHAT IS NOW TOWARDS WHAT WAS THEN...
...THAT MY KORAHN MIGHT LIVE AGAIN!
STAND FAST, DEFENDERS!
THE MOMENT I HAVE FEARED-- THE MOMENT OF DECREATION --IS UPON US!
MALACHI HAS UNRAVELED THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME ITSELF!
NEXT: Time for Every Purpose under Heaven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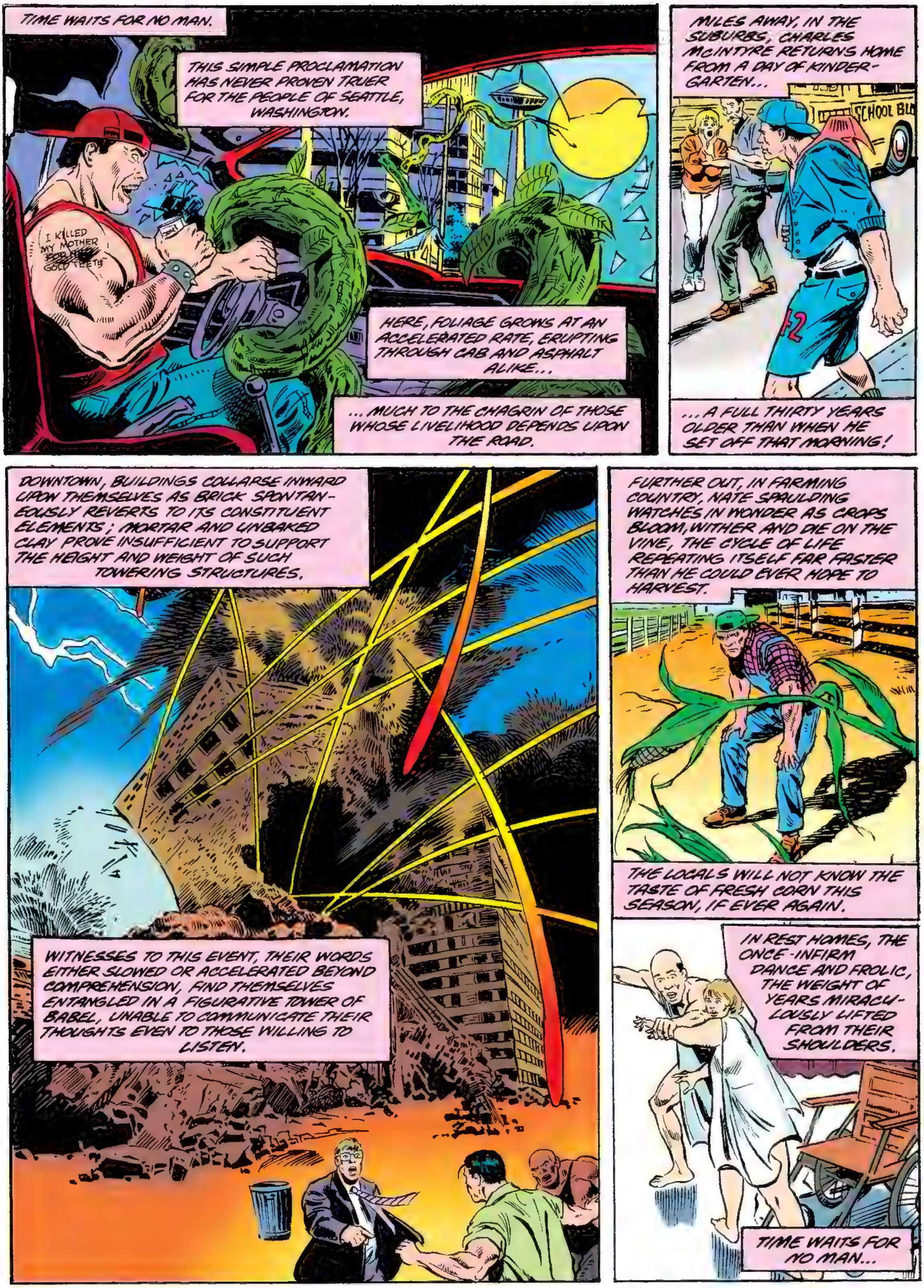
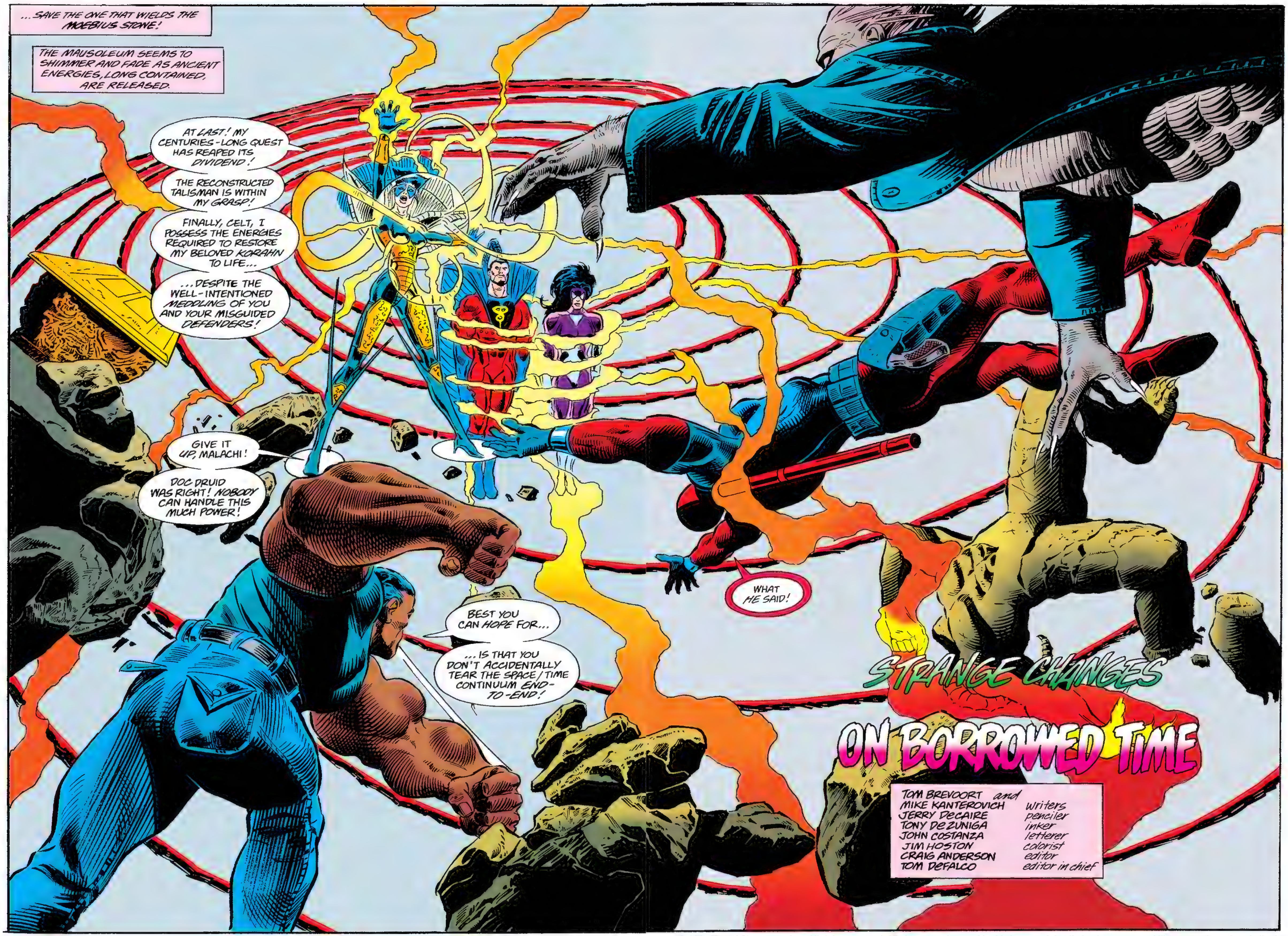

TIME WAITS FOR NO MAN.
THIS SIMPLE PROCLAMATION HAS NEVER PROVEN TRUER FOR THE PEOPLE OF SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.
I KILLED MY MOTHER FOR HER GOLD TEETH
HERE, FOLIAGE GROWS AT AN ACCELERATED RATE, ERUPTING THROUGH CAB AND ASPHALT ALIKE...
...MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN OF THOSE WHOSE LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS UPON THE ROAD.
MILES AWAY, IN THE SUBURBS, CHARLES McINTYRE RETURNS HOME FROM A DAY OF KINDERGARTEN...
SCHOOL BU
42
...A FULL THIRTY YEARS OLDER THAN WHEN HE SET OFF THAT MORNING!
DOWNTOWN, BUILDINGS COLLAPSE INWARD UPON THEMSELVES AS BRICK SPONTANEOUSLY REVERTS TO ITS CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS; MORTAR AND UNBAKED CLAY PROVE INSUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT THE HEIGHT AND WEIGHT OF SUCH TOWERING STRUCTURES.
WITNESSES TO THIS EVENT, THEIR WORDS EITHER SLOWED OR ACCELERATED BEYOND COMPREHENSION, FIND THEMSELVES ENTANGLED IN A FIGURATIVE TOWER OF BABEL, UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE THEIR THOUGHTS EVEN TO THOSE WILLING TO LISTEN.
FURTHER OUT, IN FARMING COUNTRY, NATE SPAULDING WATCHES IN WONDER AS CROPS BLOOM, WITHER AND DIE ON THE VINE, THE CYCLE OF LIFE REPEATING ITSELF FAR FASTER THAN HE COULD EVER HOPE TO HARVEST.
THE LOCALS WILL NOT KNOW THE TASTE OF FRESH CORN THIS SEASON, IF EVER AGAIN.
IN REST HOMES, THE ONCE-INFIRM DANCE AND FROLIC, THE WEIGHT OF YEARS MIRACULOUSLY LIFTED FROM THEIR SHOULDERS.
TIME WAITS FOR NO MAN...


...SAVE THE ONE THAT WIELDS THE MOEBIUS STONE!
THE MAUSOLEUM SEEMS TO SHIMMER AND FADE AS ANCIENT ENERGIES, LONG CONTAINED, ARE RELEASED.
AT LAST! MY CENTURIES-LONG QUEST HAS REAPED ITS DIVIDEND!
THE RECONSTRUCTED TALISMAN IS WITHIN MY GRASP!
FINALLY, CELT, I POSSESS THE ENERGIES REQUIRED TO RESTORE MY BELOVED KORAHN TO LIFE...
...DESPITE THE WELL-INTENTIONED MEDDLING OF YOU AND YOUR MISGUIDED DEFENDERS!
GIVE IT UP, MALACHI!
DOC DRUID WAS RIGHT! NOBODY CAN HANDLE THIS MUCH POWER!
WHAT HE SAID!
BEST YOU CAN HOPE FOR...
...IS THAT YOU DON'T ACCIDENTALLY TEAR THE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM END-TO-END!
STRANGE CHANGES
ON BORROWED TIME
TOM BREVOORT and MIKE KANTEROVICH writers
JERRY DeCAIRE penciler
TONY DeZUNIGA inker
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
JIM HOSTON colorist
CRAIG ANDERSON editor
TOM DeFALCO editor in chief

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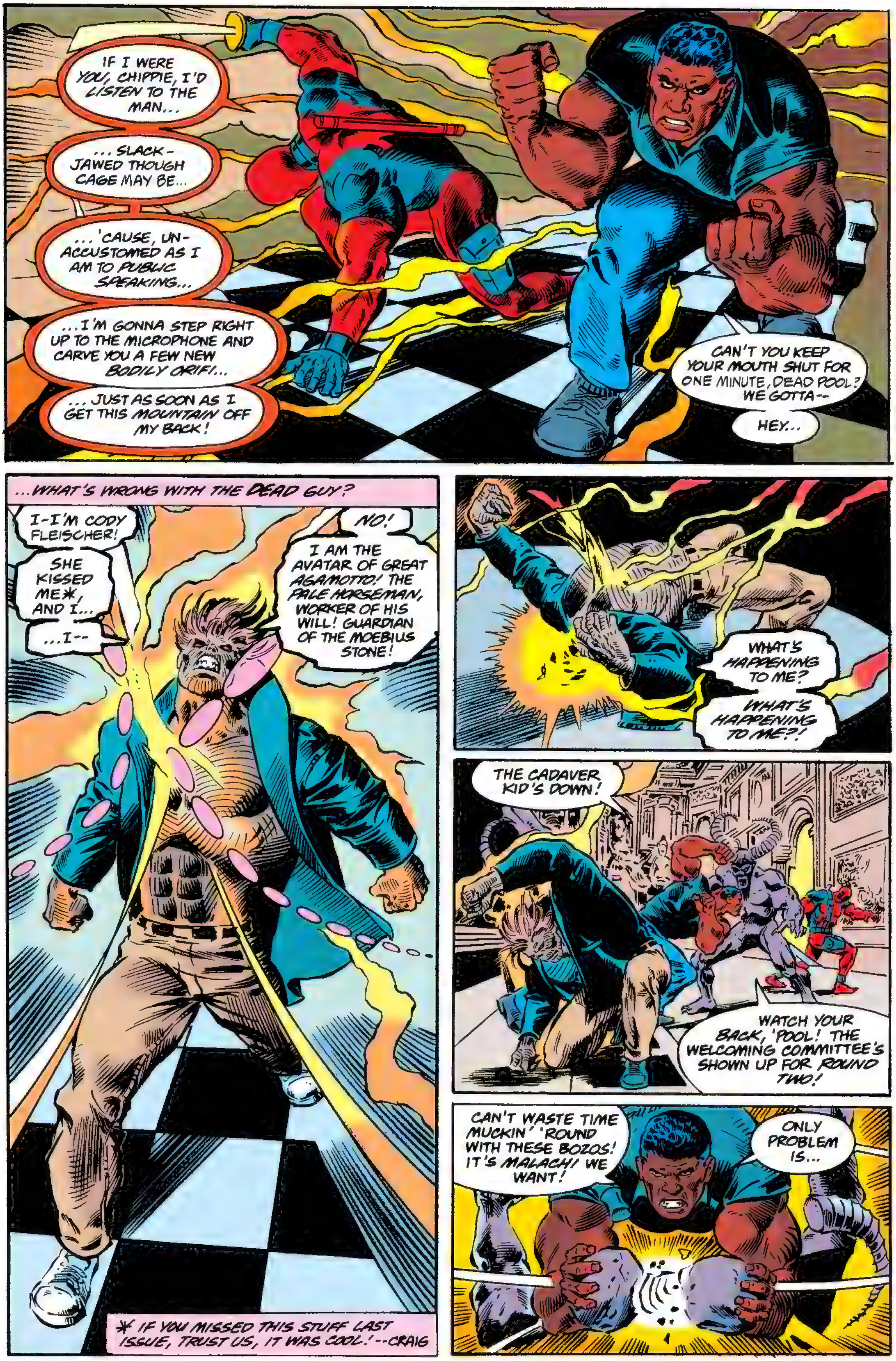
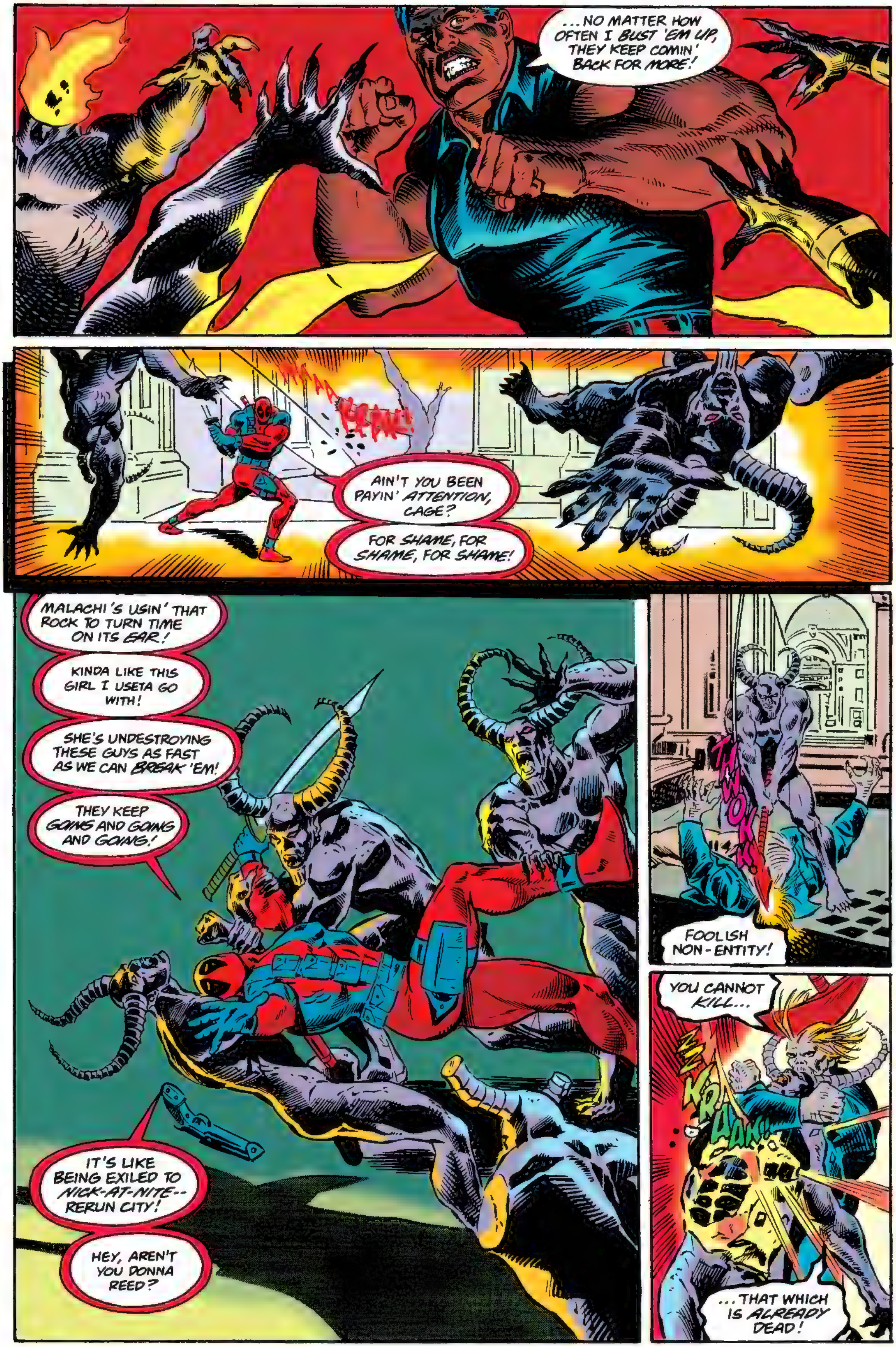
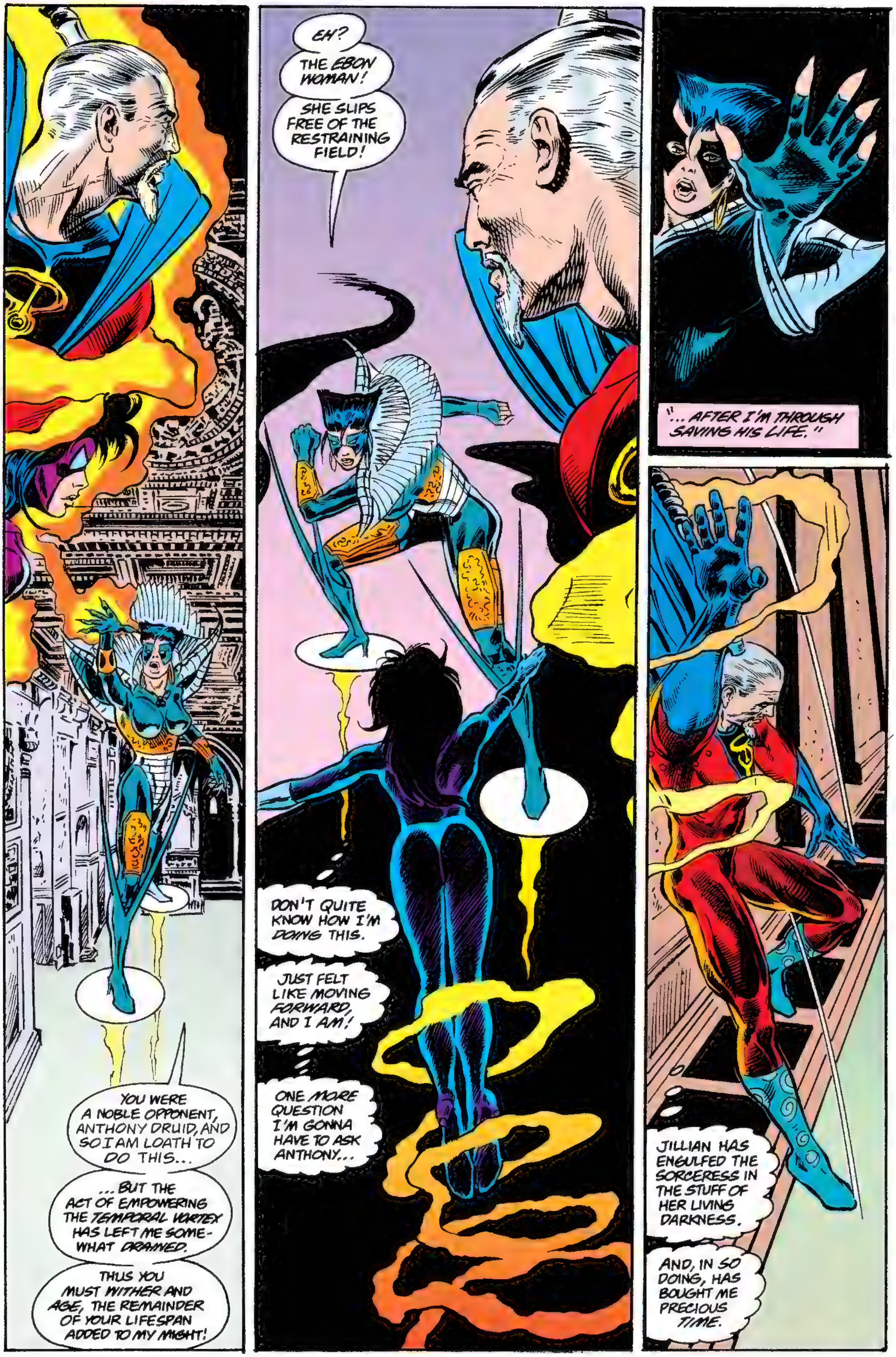
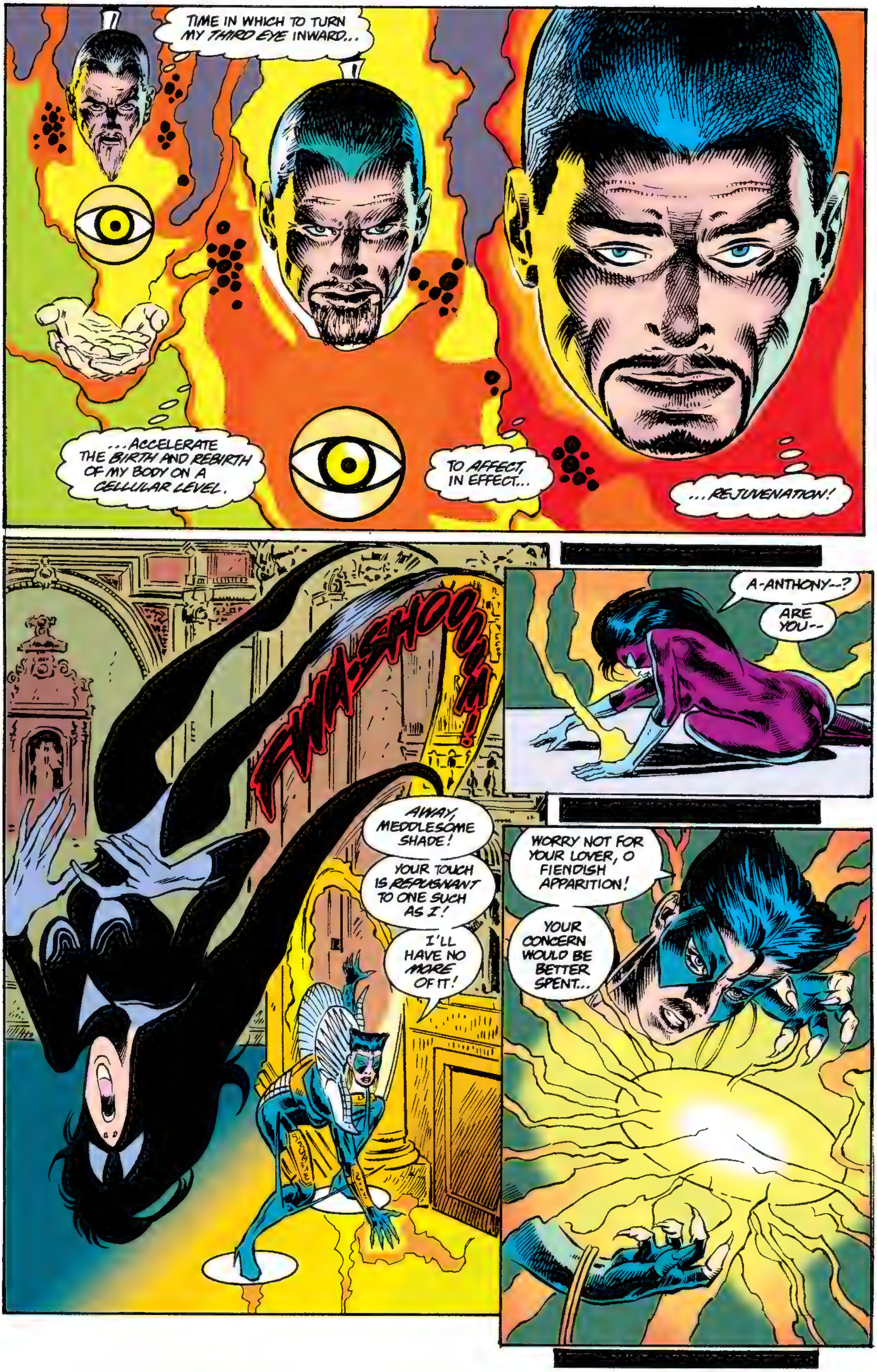
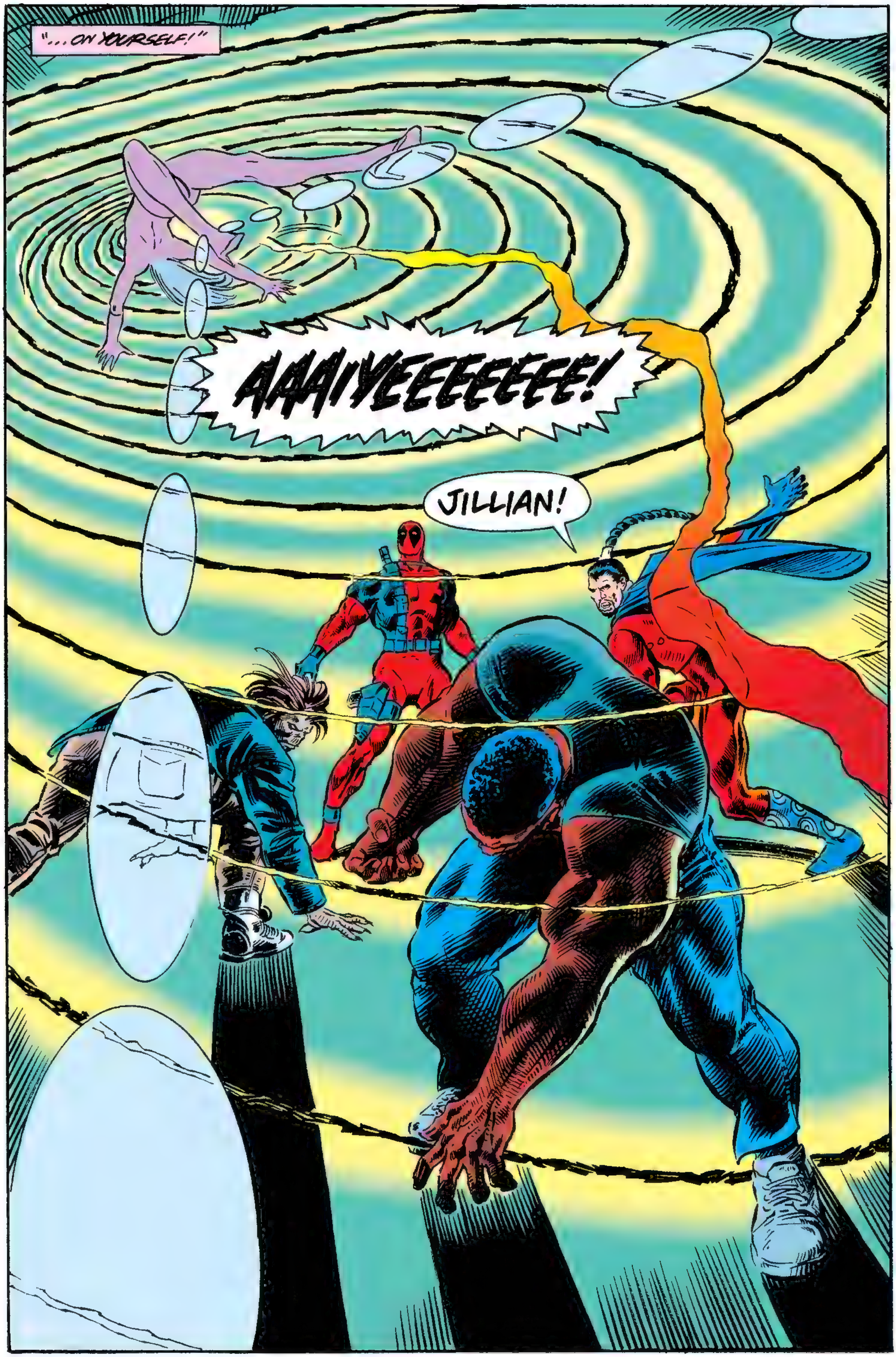
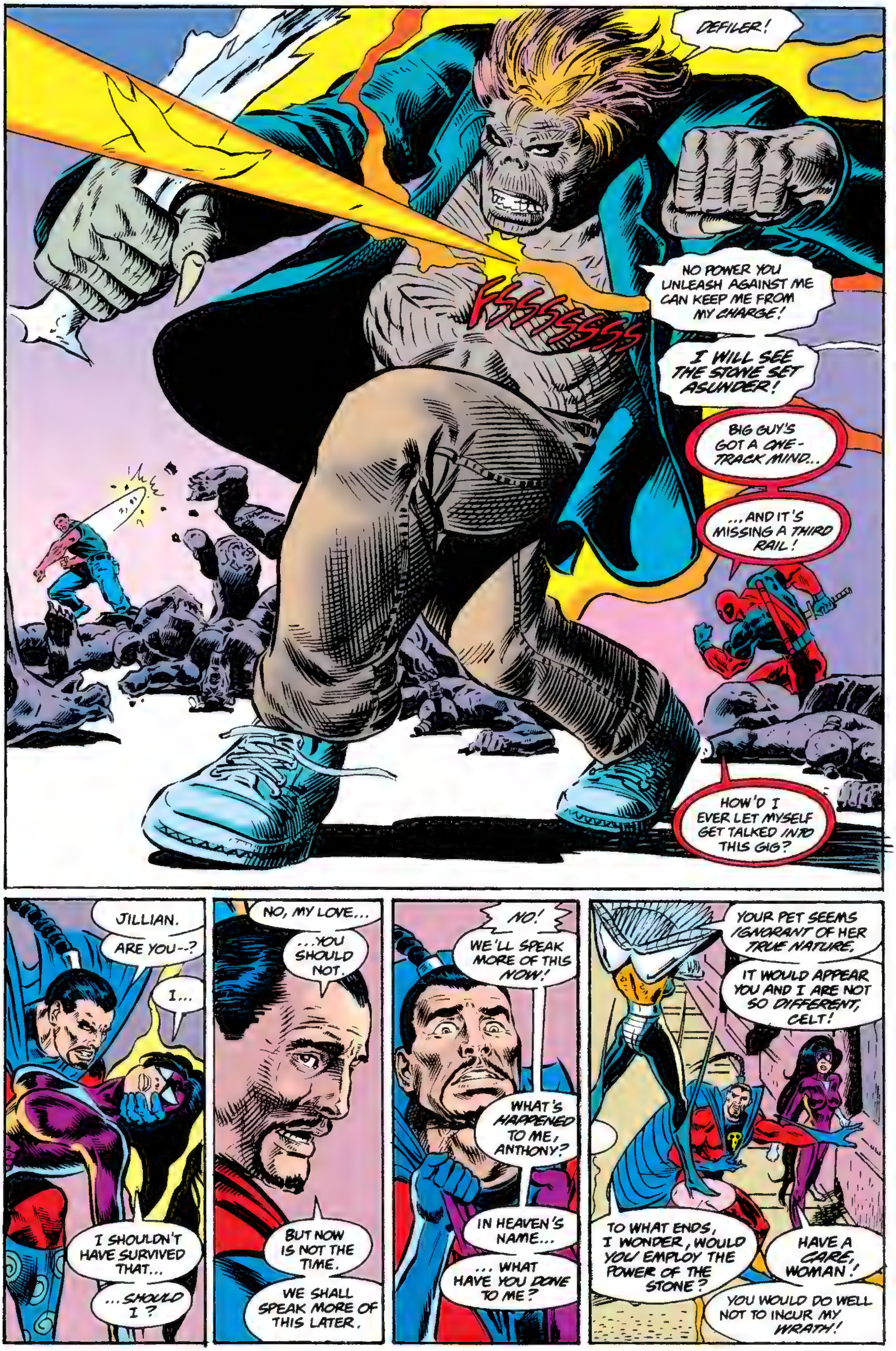

IF I WERE YOU, CHIPPIE, I'D LISTEN TO THE MAN...
... SLACK-JAWED THOUGH CAGE MAY BE...
...'CAUSE, UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM TO PUBLIC SPEAKING...
...I'M GONNA STEP RIGHT UP TO THE MICROPHONE AND CARVE YOU A FEW NEW BODILY ORIFI...
... JUST AS SOON AS I GET THIS MOUNTAIN OFF MY BACK!
CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT FOR ONE MINUTE, DEAD POOL? WE GOTTA--
HEY...
...WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE DEAD GUY?
I-I'M CODY FLEISCHER!
SHE KISSED ME*, AND I...
...I--
NO!
I AM THE AVATAR OF GREAT AGAMOTTO! THE PALE HORSEMAN, WORKER OF HIS WILL! GUARDIAN OF THE MOEBIUS STONE!
* IF YOU MISSED THIS STUFF LAST ISSUE, TRUST US, IT WAS COOL! --CRAIG
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!
THE CADAVER KID'S DOWN!
WATCH YOUR BACK, 'POOL! THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE'S SHOWN UP FOR ROUND TWO!
CAN'T WASTE TIME MUCKIN' 'ROUND WITH THESE BOZOS! IT'S MALACH! WE WANT!
ONLY PROBLEM IS...

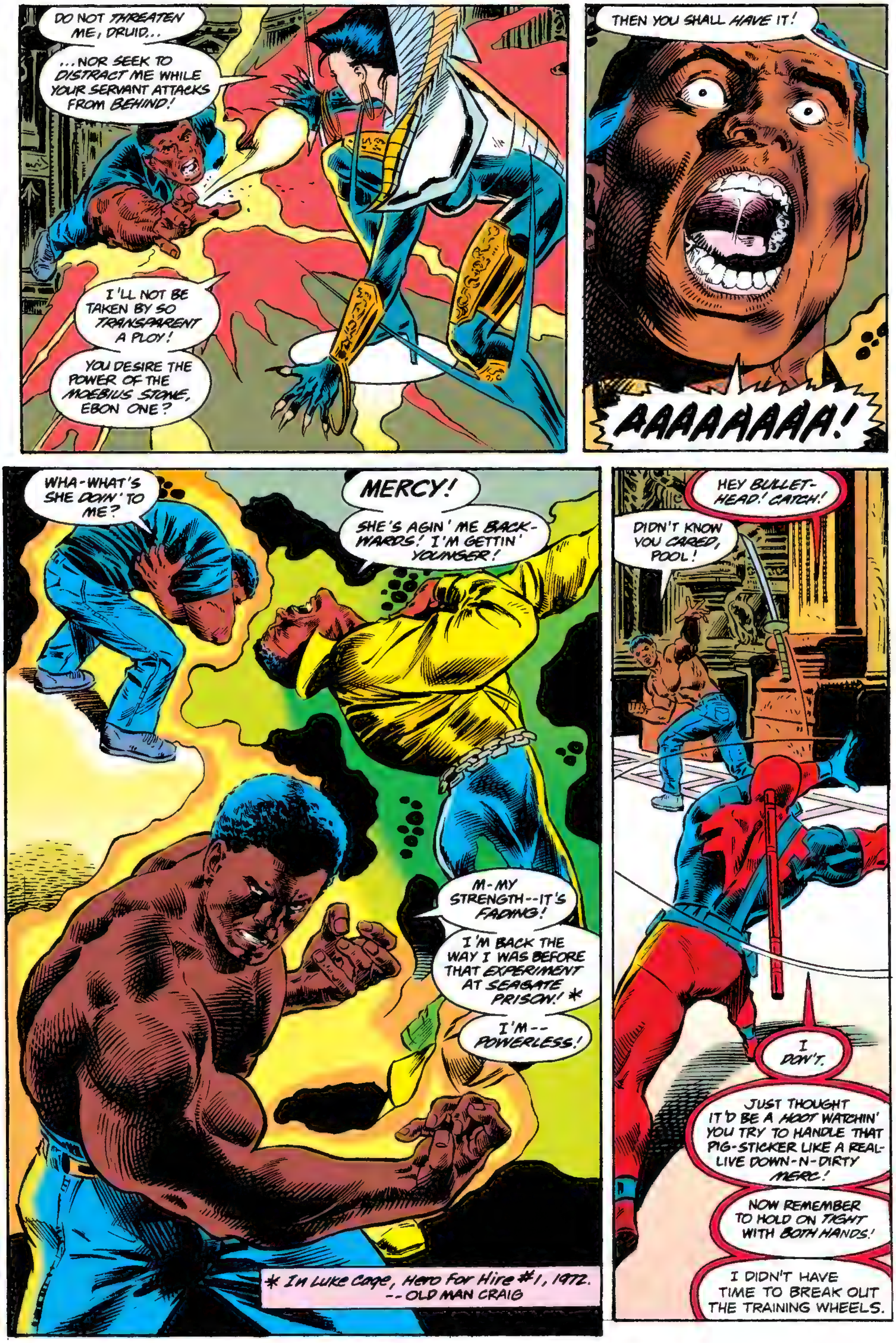

...NO MATTER HOW OFTEN I *BUST* 'EM UP, THEY KEEP COMIN' BACK FOR *MORE!*
WHAA
AIN'T YOU BEEN PAYIN' *ATTENTION,* CAGE?
FOR *SHAME,* FOR *SHAME,* FOR *SHAME!*
MALACHI'S USIN' THAT ROCK TO TURN TIME ON ITS *EAR!*
KINDA LIKE THIS GIRL I USETA GO WITH!
SHE'S UNDESTROYING THESE GUYS AS FAST AS WE CAN *BREAK* 'EM!
THEY KEEP *GOING* AND *GOING* AND *GOING!*
IT'S LIKE BEING EXILED TO *NICK-AT-NITE*-- RERUN CITY!
HEY, AREN'T YOU DONNA REED?
THWOKK!
FOOLISH NON-ENTITY!
YOU CANNOT *KILL...*
KRAAAK!
...THAT WHICH IS *ALREADY* DEAD!

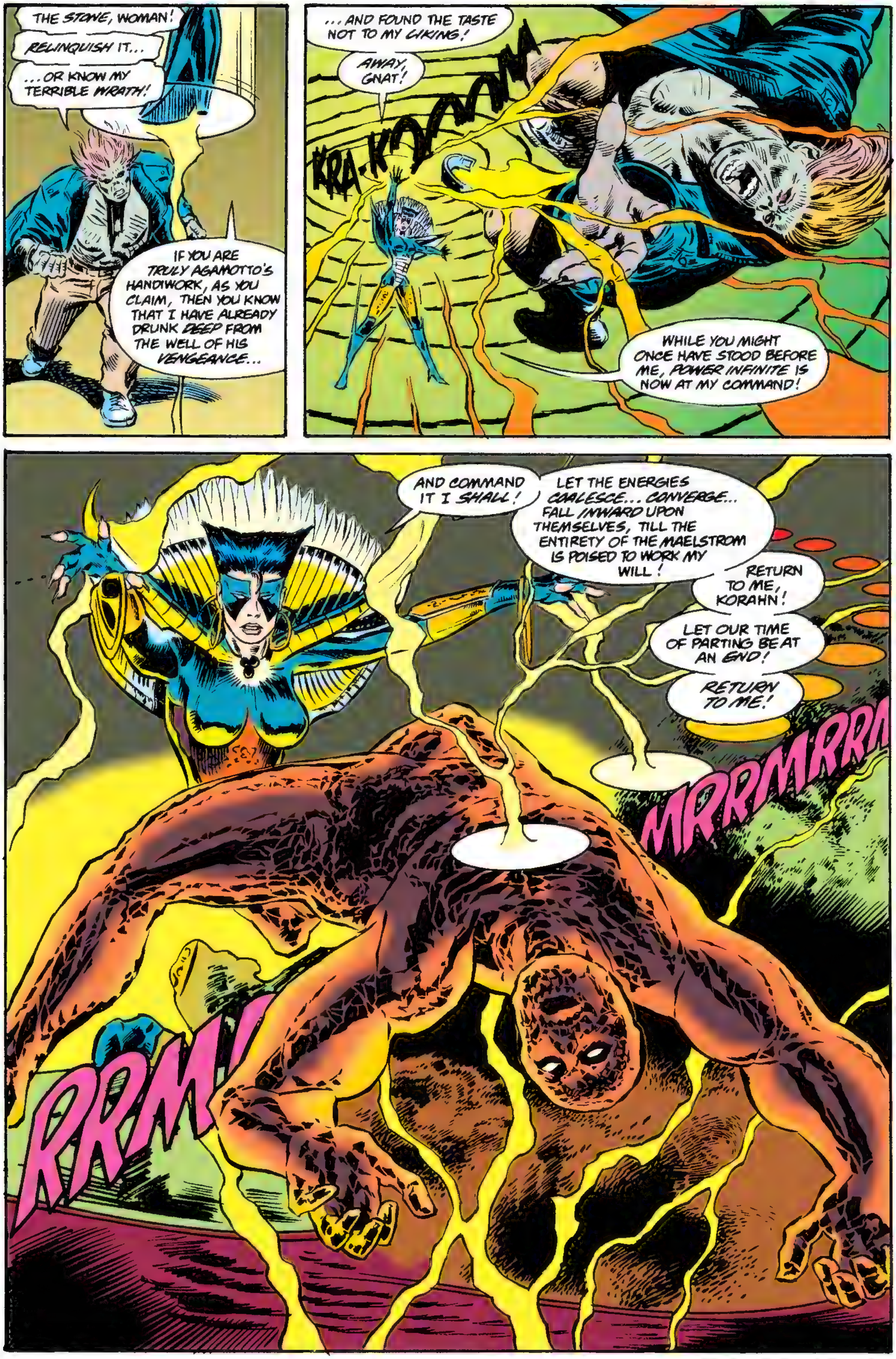

YOU WERE A NOBLE OPPONENT, ANTHONY DRUID, AND SO I AM LOATH TO DO THIS...
...BUT THE ACT OF EMPOWERING THE *TEMPORAL VORTEX* HAS LEFT ME SOMEWHAT *DRAINED*.
THUS YOU *MUST WITHER* AND *AGE*, THE *REMAINDER* OF YOUR LIFESPAN *ADDED* TO MY *MIGHT*!
EH?
THE *EBON WOMAN*!
SHE SLIPS FREE OF THE RESTRAINING FIELD!
DON'T QUITE KNOW HOW I'M *DOING* THIS.
JUST FELT LIKE MOVING *FORWARD*, AND I *AM*!
ONE *MORE* QUESTION I'M GONNA HAVE TO ASK ANTHONY...
"... AFTER I'M THROUGH SAVING HIS LIFE."
JILLIAN HAS ENGULFED THE SORCERESS IN THE STUFF OF HER LIVING DARKNESS.
AND, IN SO DOING, HAS BOUGHT ME PRECIOUS *TIME*.

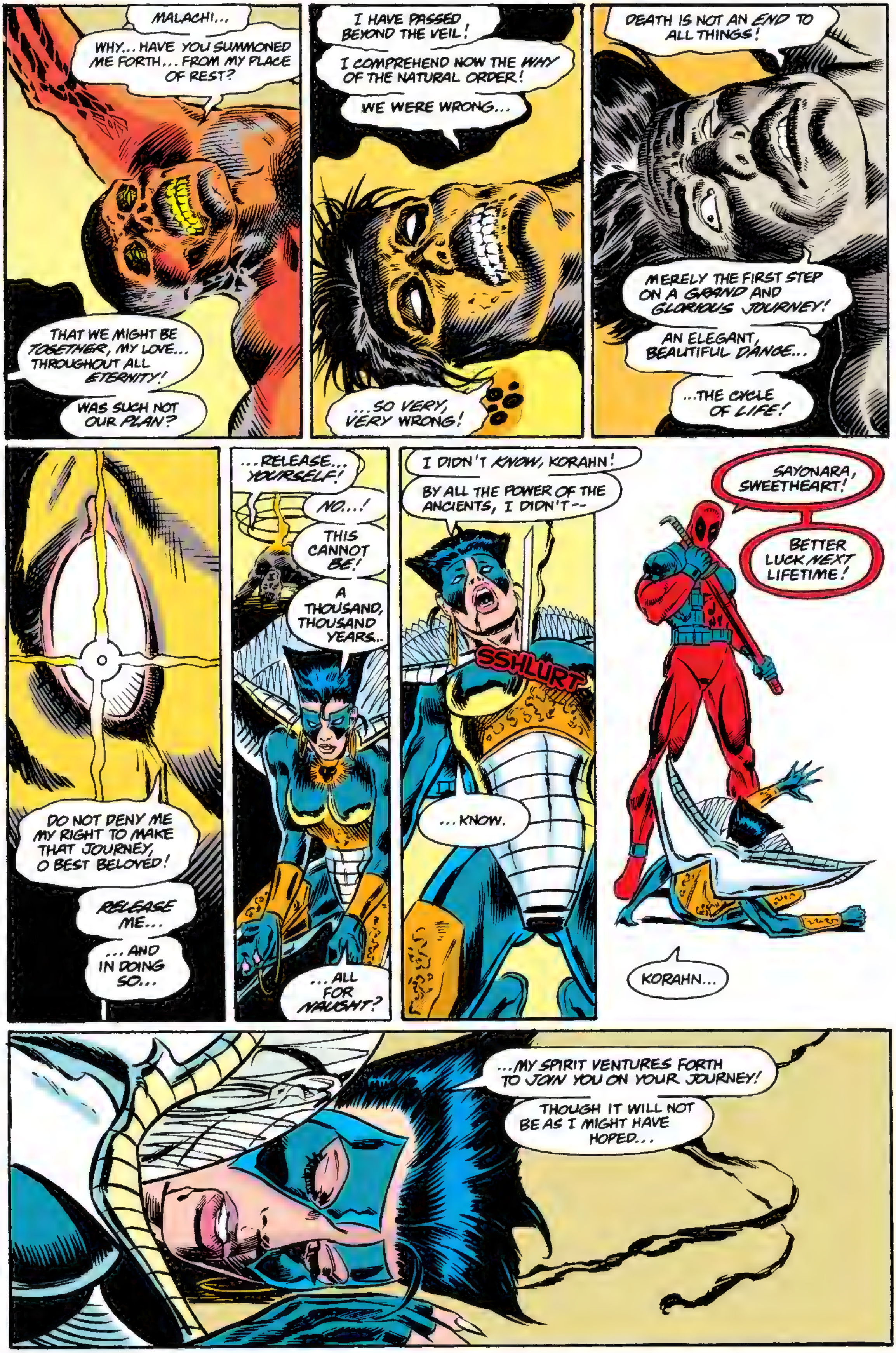

TIME IN WHICH TO TURN MY THIRD EYE INWARD...
...ACCELERATE THE BIRTH AND REBIRTH OF MY BODY ON A CELLULAR LEVEL.
TO AFFECT, IN EFFECT...
...REJUVENATION!
FWA-SHOOOOM!
AWAY, MEDDLESOME SHADE!
YOUR TOUCH IS REPUGNANT TO ONE SUCH AS I!
I'LL HAVE NO MORE OF IT!
[redacted]
A-ANTHONY--?
ARE YOU--
[redacted]
WORRY NOT FOR YOUR LOVER, O FIENDISH APPARITION!
YOUR CONCERN WOULD BE BETTER SPENT...
[redacted]

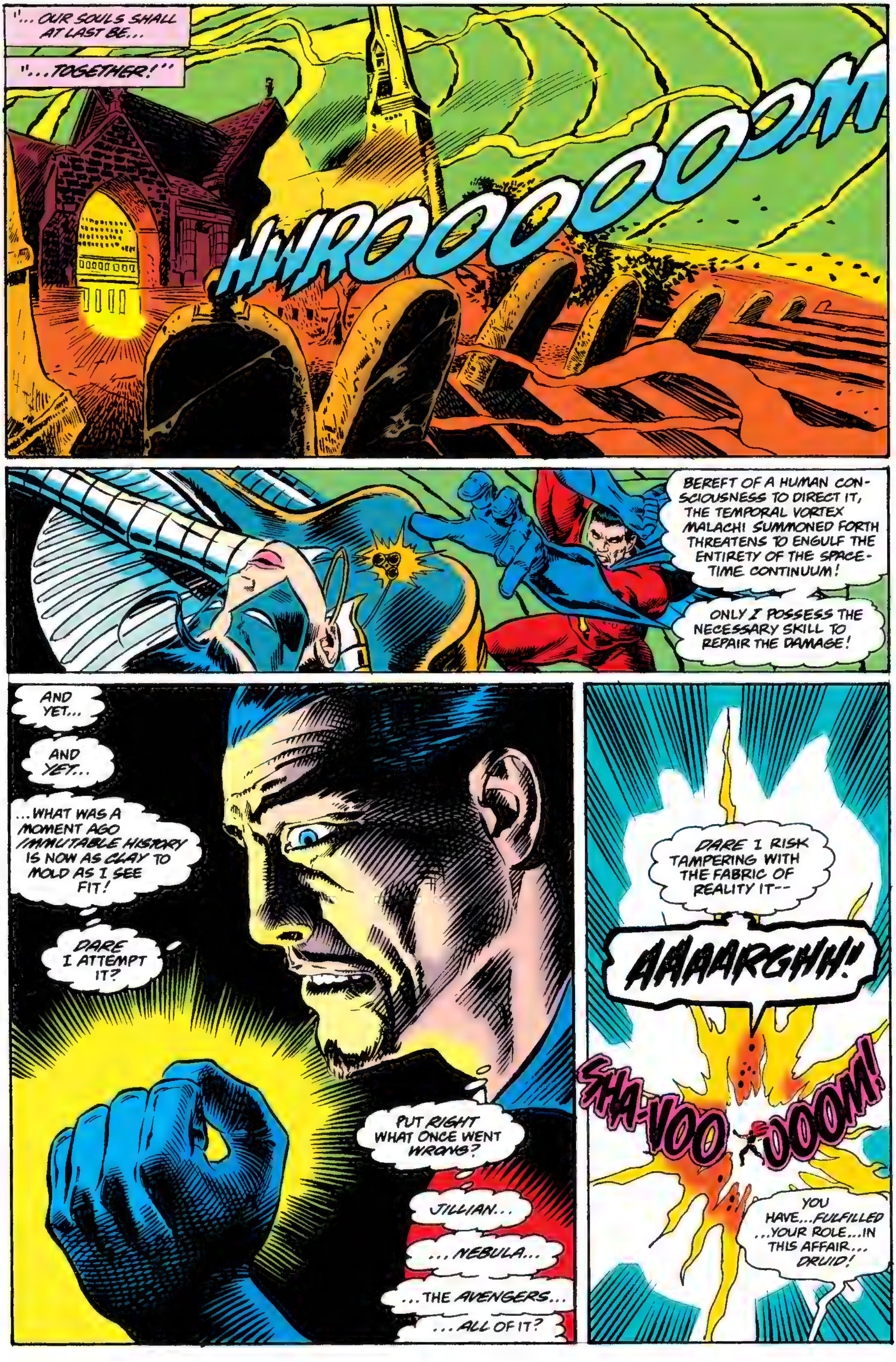

"... ON YOURSELF!"
AAAIYEEEEEEEE!
JILLIAN!

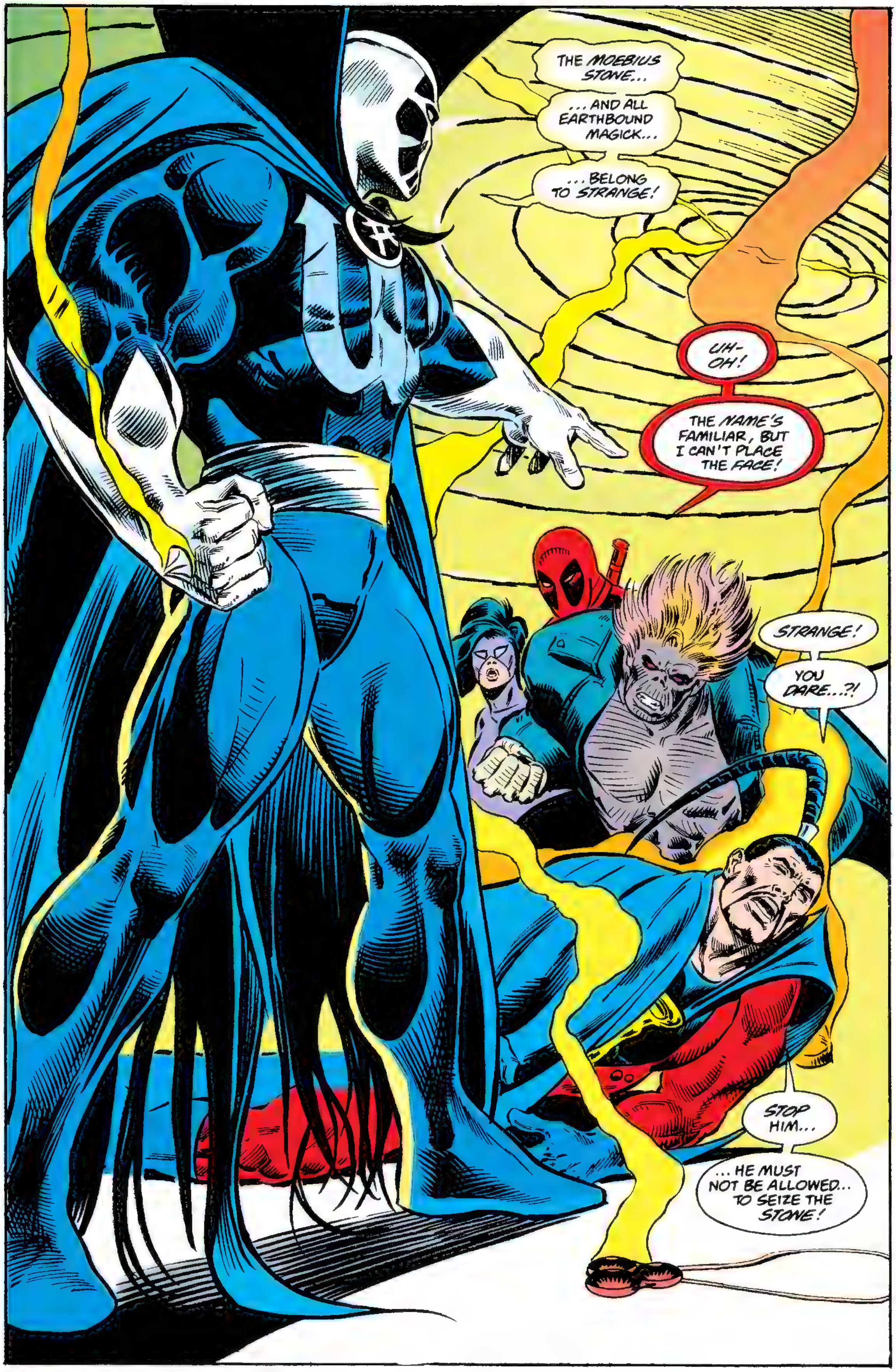

DEFILER!
FSSSSSSSS
NO POWER YOU UNLEASH AGAINST ME CAN KEEP ME FROM MY CHARGE!
I WILL SEE THE STONE SET ASUNDER!
BIG GUY'S GOT A ONE-TRACK MIND...
...AND IT'S MISSING A THIRD RAIL!
HOW'D I EVER LET MYSELF GET TALKED INTO THIS GIG?
JILLIAN.
ARE YOU--?
I...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED THAT...
...SHOULD I?
NO, MY LOVE...
...YOU SHOULD NOT.
BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME.
WE SHALL SPEAK MORE OF THIS LATER.
NO!
WE'LL SPEAK MORE OF THIS NOW!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME, ANTHONY?
IN HEAVEN'S NAME...
...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?
YOUR PET SEEMS IGNORANT OF HER TRUE NATURE.
IT WOULD APPEAR YOU AND I ARE NOT SO DIFFERENT, CELT!
TO WHAT ENDS, I WONDER, WOULD YOU EMPLOY THE POWER OF THE STONE?
HAVE A CARE, WOMAN!
YOU WOULD DO WELL NOT TO INCUR MY WRATH!

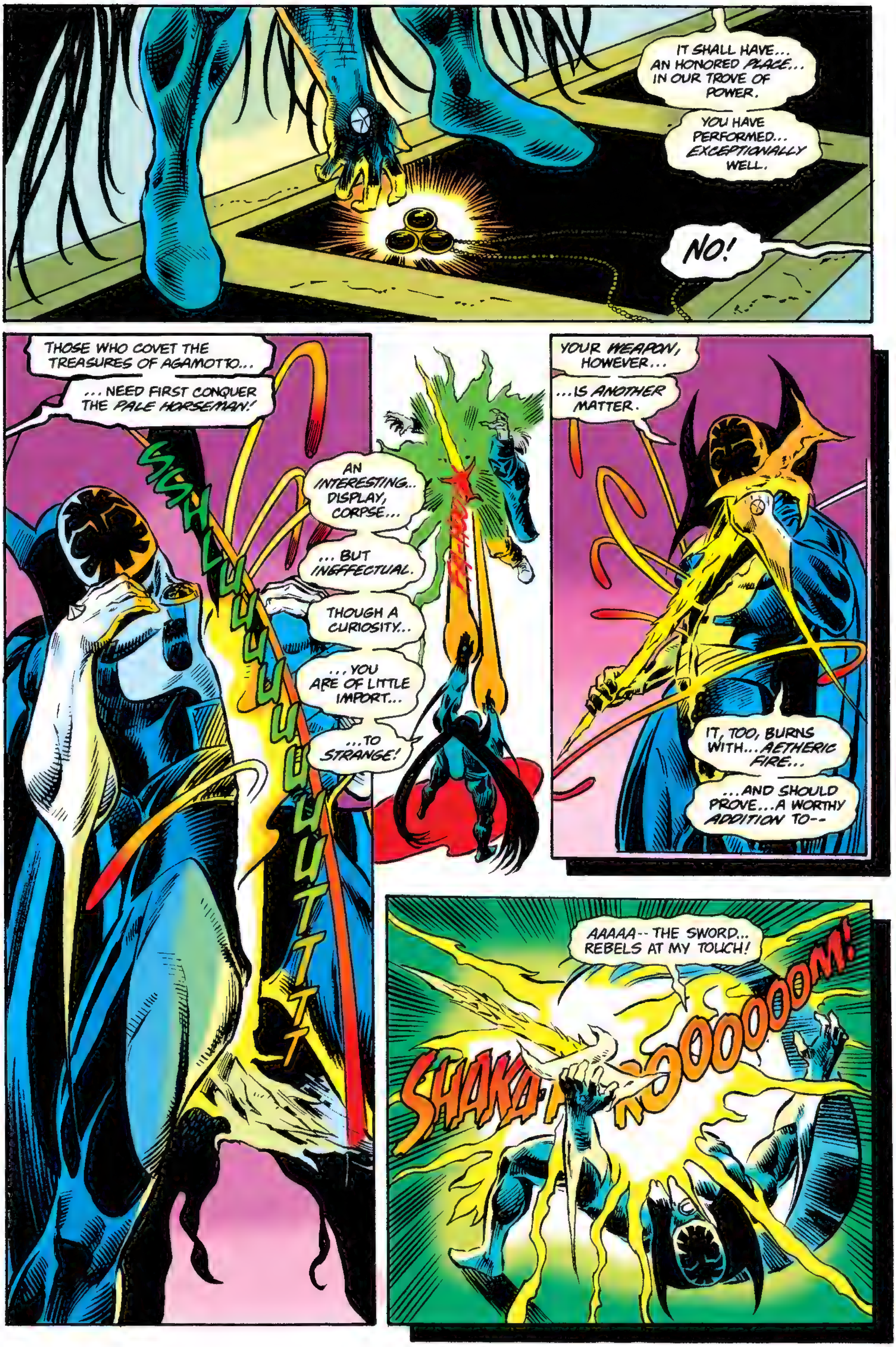

DO NOT THREATEN ME, DRUID...
...NOR SEEK TO DISTRACT ME WHILE YOUR SERVANT ATTACKS FROM BEHIND!
I'LL NOT BE TAKEN BY SO TRANSPARENT A PLOY!
YOU DESIRE THE POWER OF THE MOEBIUS STONE, EBON ONE?
THEN YOU SHALL HAVE IT!
AAAAAAAA!
WHA-WHAT'S SHE DOIN' TO ME?
MERCY!
SHE'S AGIN' ME BACKWARDS! I'M GETTIN' YOUNGER!
M-MY STRENGTH--IT'S FADING!
I'M BACK THE WAY I WAS BEFORE THAT EXPERIMENT AT SEAGATE PRISON! *
I'M--POWERLESS!
* In Luke Cage, Hero For Hire #1, 1972. --OLD MAN CRAIG
HEY BULLET-HEAD! CATCH!
DIDN'T KNOW YOU CARED, POOL!
I DON'T.
JUST THOUGHT IT'D BE A HOOT WATCHIN' YOU TRY TO HANDLE THAT PIG-STICKER LIKE A REAL-LIVE DOWN-N-DIRTY MERC!
NOW REMEMBER TO HOLD ON TIGHT WITH BOTH HANDS!
I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO BREAK OUT THE TRAINING WHEELS.

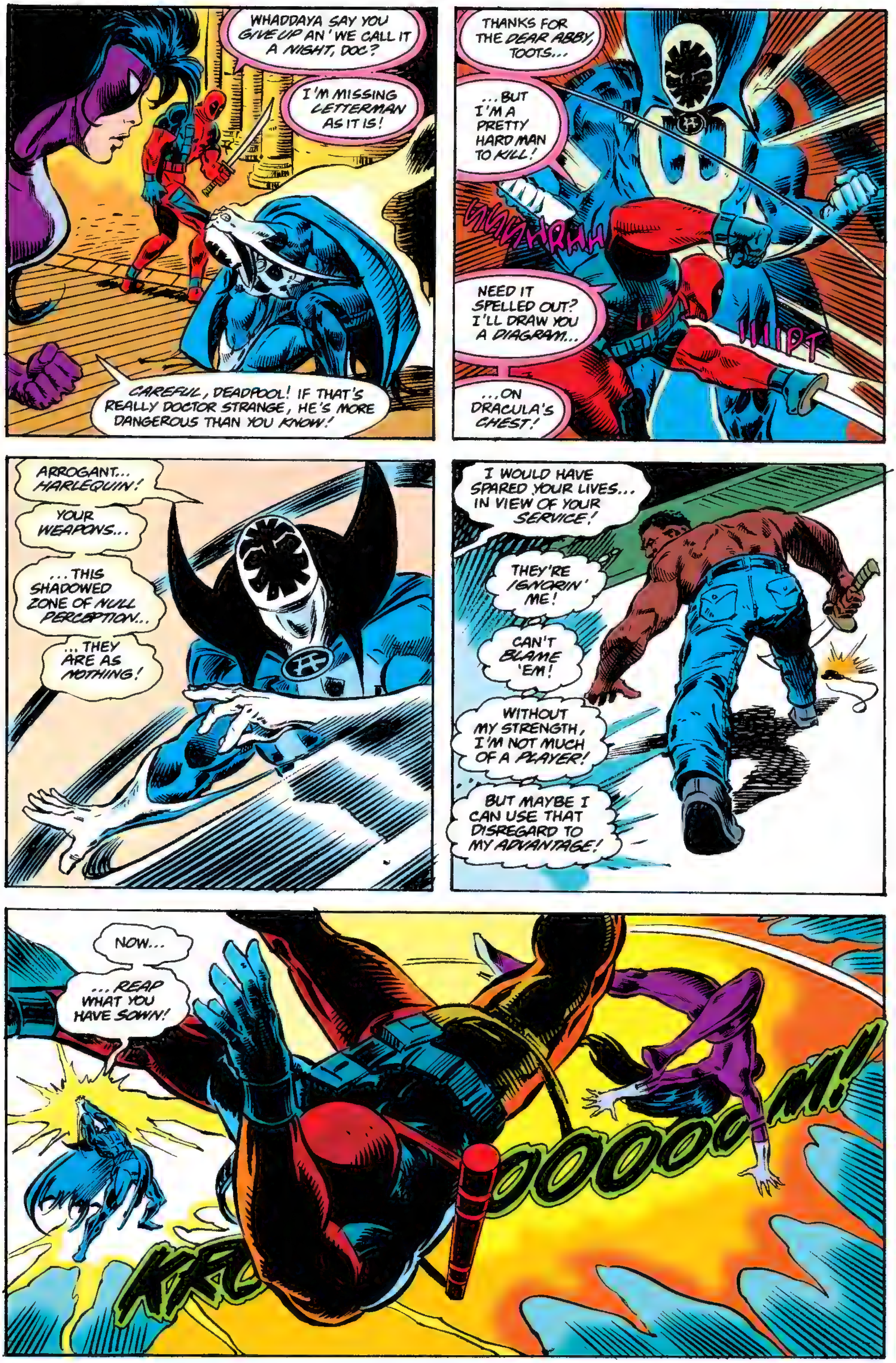

THE STONE, WOMAN!
RELINQUISH IT...
...OR KNOW MY TERRIBLE WRATH!
IF YOU ARE TRULY AGAMOTTO'S HANDIWORK, AS YOU CLAIM, THEN YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE ALREADY DRUNK DEEP FROM THE WELL OF HIS VENGEANCE...
...AND FOUND THE TASTE NOT TO MY LIKING!
AWAY, GNAT!
KRA-KOOMMM
WHILE YOU MIGHT ONCE HAVE STOOD BEFORE ME, POWER INFINITE IS NOW AT MY COMMAND!
AND COMMAND IT I SHALL!
LET THE ENERGIES COALESCE... CONVERGE... FALL INWARD UPON THEMSELVES, TILL THE ENTIRETY OF THE MAELSTROM IS POISED TO WORK MY WILL!
RETURN TO ME, KORAHN!
LET OUR TIME OF PARTING BE AT AN END!
RETURN TO ME!
MRRMRRM
RRM!

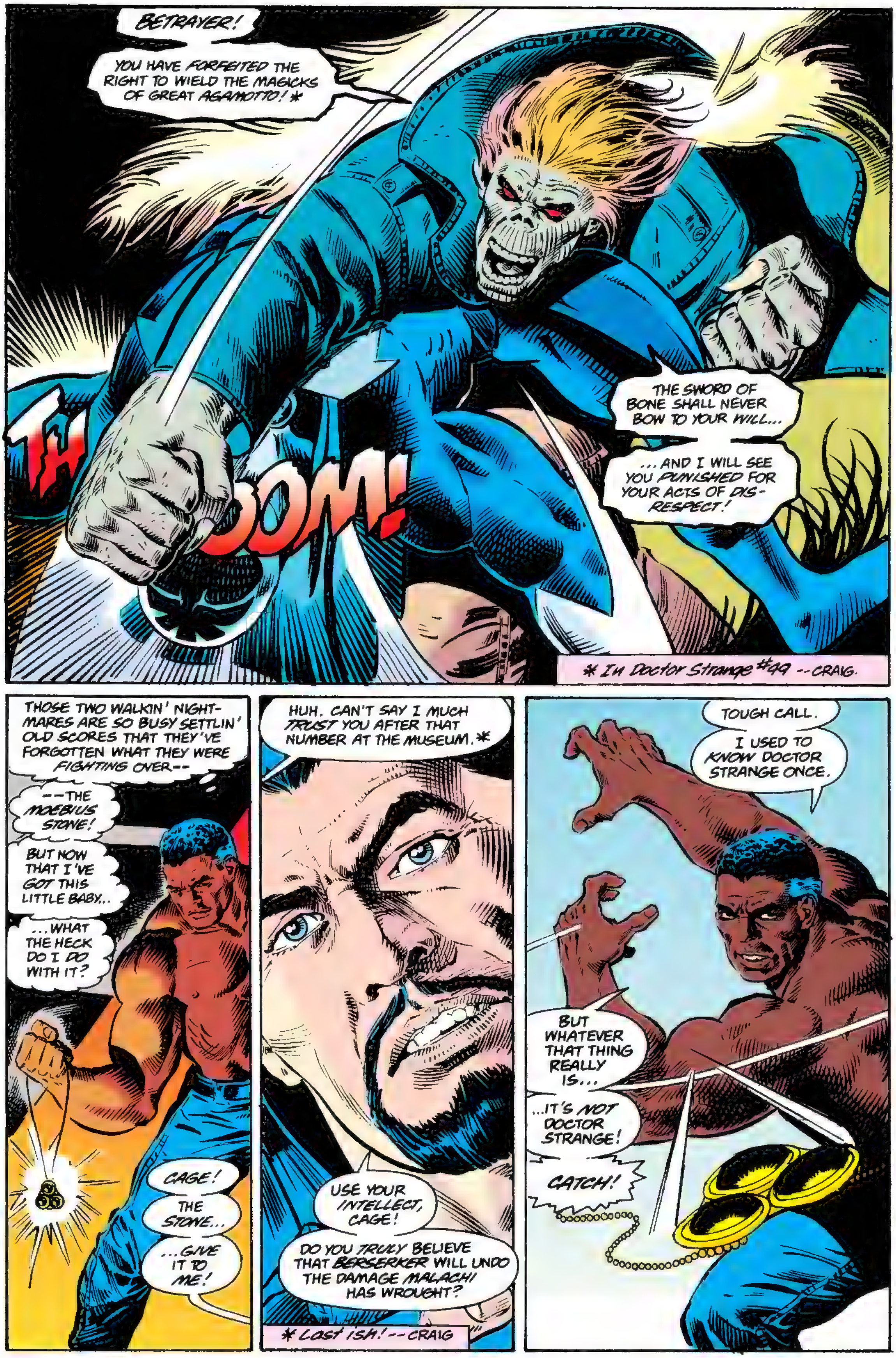

MALACHI...
WHY... HAVE YOU SUMMONED ME FORTH... FROM MY PLACE OF REST?
THAT WE MIGHT BE TOGETHER, MY LOVE... THROUGHOUT ALL ETERNITY!
WAS SUCH NOT OUR PLAN?
I HAVE PASSED BEYOND THE VEIL!
I COMPREHEND NOW THE WHY OF THE NATURAL ORDER!
WE WERE WRONG...
...SO VERY, VERY WRONG!
DEATH IS NOT AN END TO ALL THINGS!
MERELY THE FIRST STEP ON A GRAND AND GLORIOUS JOURNEY!
AN ELEGANT, BEAUTIFUL DANCE...
...THE CYCLE OF LIFE!
DO NOT DENY ME MY RIGHT TO MAKE THAT JOURNEY, O BEST BELOVED!
RELEASE ME...
...AND IN DOING SO...
...RELEASE... YOURSELF!
NO...!
THIS CANNOT BE!
A THOUSAND, THOUSAND YEARS...
...ALL FOR NAUGHT?
I DIDN'T KNOW, KORAHN!
BY ALL THE POWER OF THE ANCIENTS, I DIDN'T--
SSHLURT
...KNOW.
SAYONARA, SWEETHEART!
BETTER LUCK NEXT LIFETIME!
KORAHN...
...MY SPIRIT VENTURES FORTH TO JOIN YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY!
THOUGH IT WILL NOT BE AS I MIGHT HAVE HOPED...

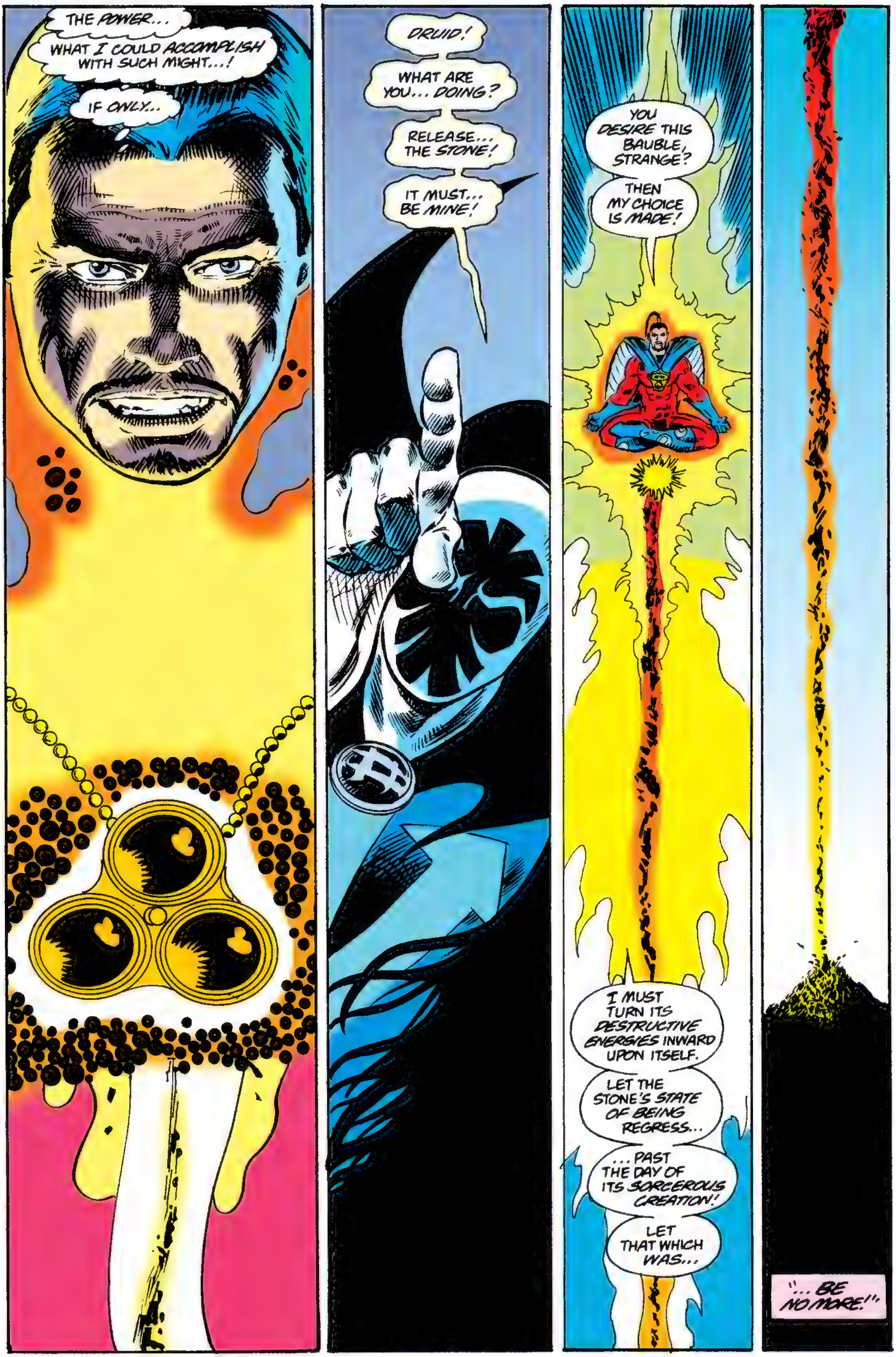

"...OUR SOULS SHALL AT LAST BE...
"...TOGETHER!"
HWROOOOOOOOOM
BEREFT OF A HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS TO DIRECT IT, THE TEMPORAL VORTEX MALACHI SUMMONED FORTH THREATENS TO ENGULF THE ENTIRETY OF THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM!
ONLY I POSSESS THE NECESSARY SKILL TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE!
AND YET...
AND YET...
...WHAT WAS A MOMENT AGO IMMUTABLE HISTORY IS NOW AS CLAY TO MOLD AS I SEE FIT!
DARE I ATTEMPT IT?
PUT RIGHT WHAT ONCE WENT WRONG?
JILLIAN...
...NEBULA...
...THE AVENGERS...
...ALL OF IT?
DARE I RISK TAMPERING WITH THE FABRIC OF REALITY IT--
AAAARGHH!
SHA-VOOOOOM!
YOU HAVE...FULFILLED ...YOUR ROLE...IN THIS AFFAIR... DRUID!

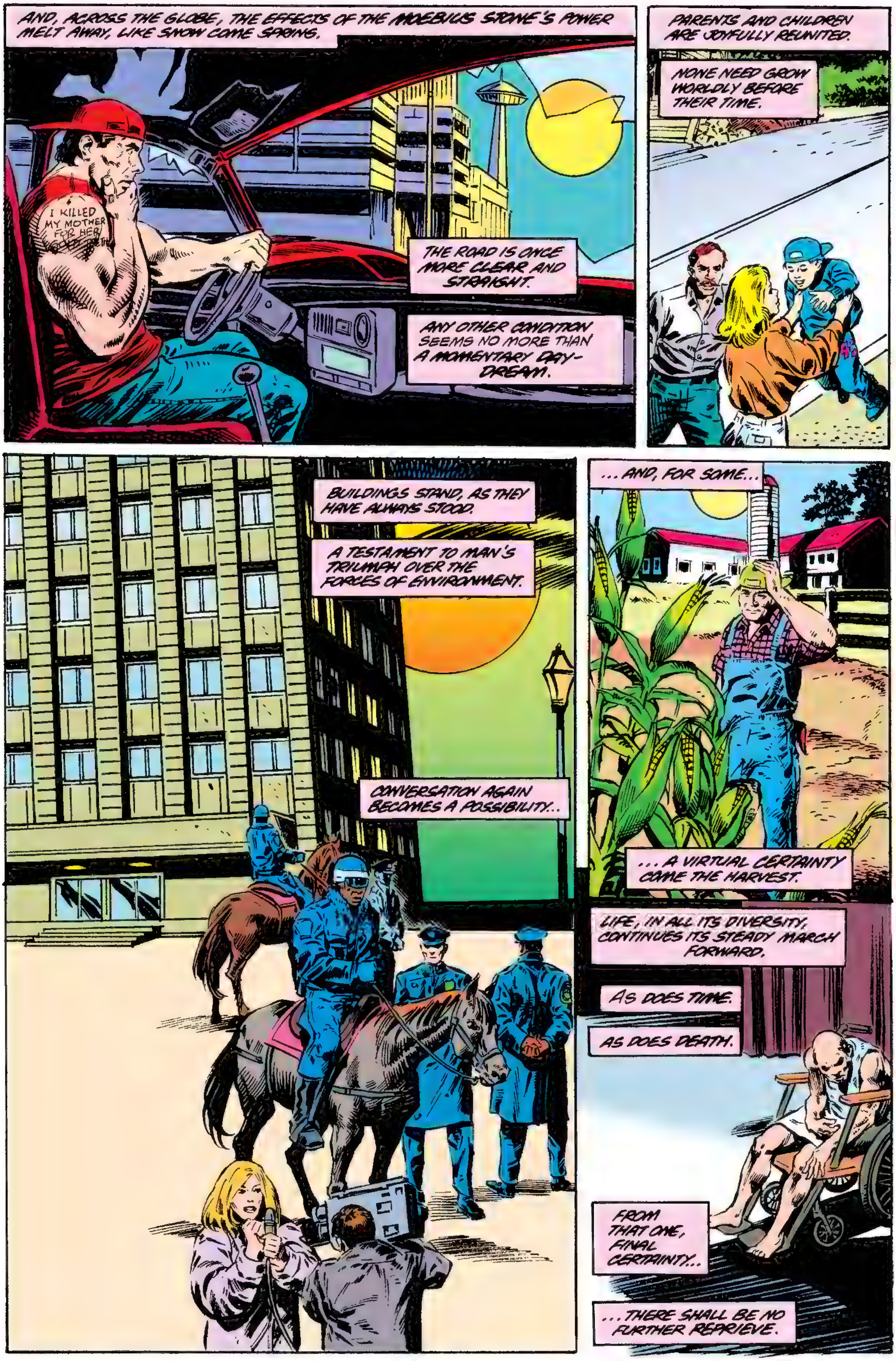

THE *MOEBIUS STONE*...
... AND ALL EARTHBOUND MAGICK...
... BELONG TO *STRANGE!*
UH-OH!
THE *NAME'S* FAMILIAR, BUT I CAN'T PLACE THE *FACE!*
STRANGE!
YOU *DARE*...?!
STOP HIM...
... HE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED... TO SEIZE THE *STONE!*

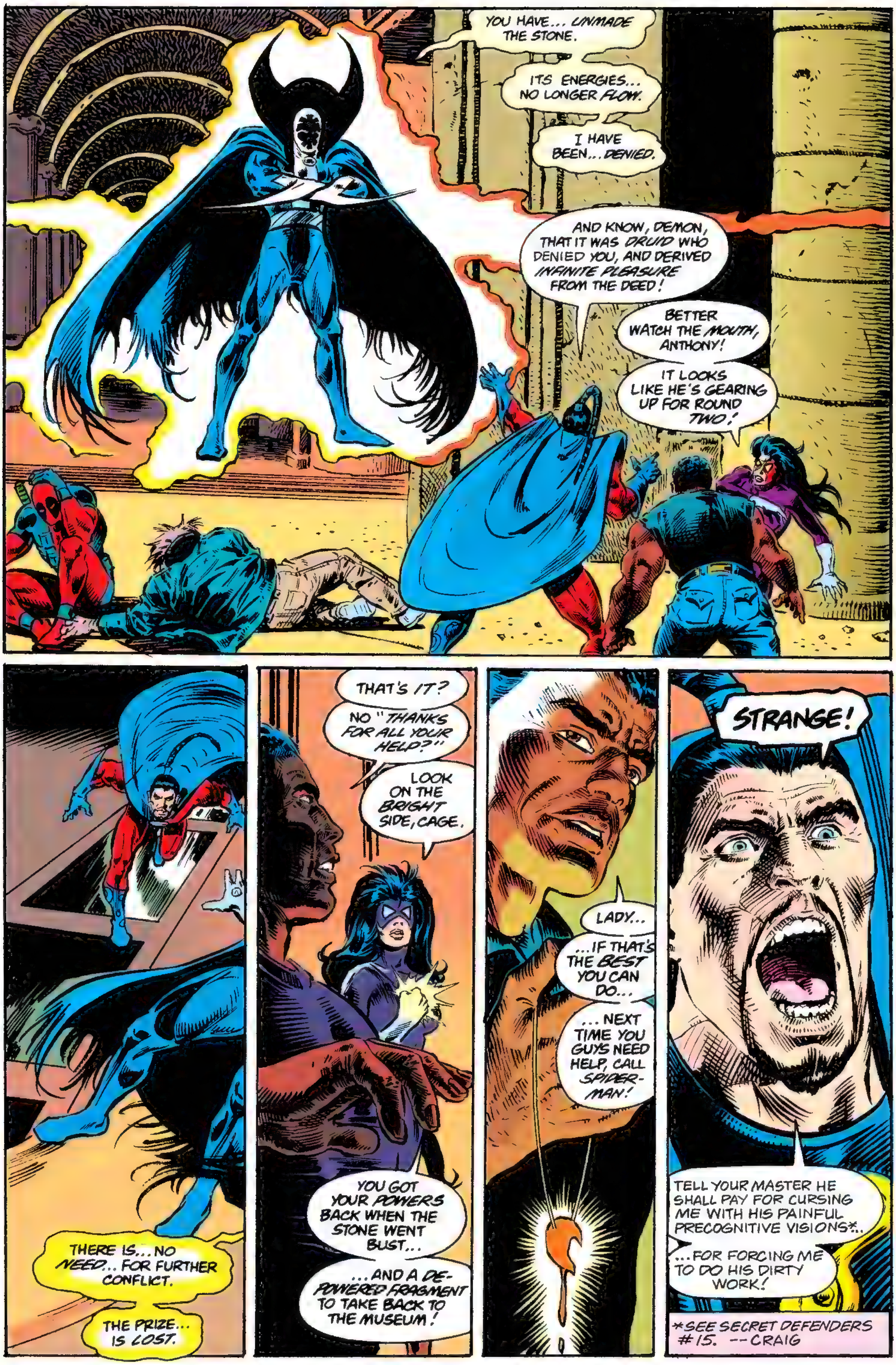

IT SHALL HAVE... AN HONORED PLACE... IN OUR TROVE OF POWER.
YOU HAVE PERFORMED... EXCEPTIONALLY WELL.
NO!
THOSE WHO COVET THE TREASURES OF AGAMOTTO...
...NEED FIRST CONQUER THE PALE HORSEMAN!
SSHUUUUUUUUUUTTTT
AN INTERESTING... DISPLAY, CORPSE...
...BUT INEFFECTUAL.
THOUGH A CURIOSITY...
...YOU ARE OF LITTLE IMPORT...
...TO STRANGE!
YOUR WEAPON, HOWEVER...
...IS ANOTHER MATTER.
IT, TOO, BURNS WITH...AETHERIC FIRE...
...AND SHOULD PROVE...A WORTHY ADDITION TO--
AAAAA-- THE SWORD... REBELS AT MY TOUCH!
SHAKA-ROOOOOOOM!

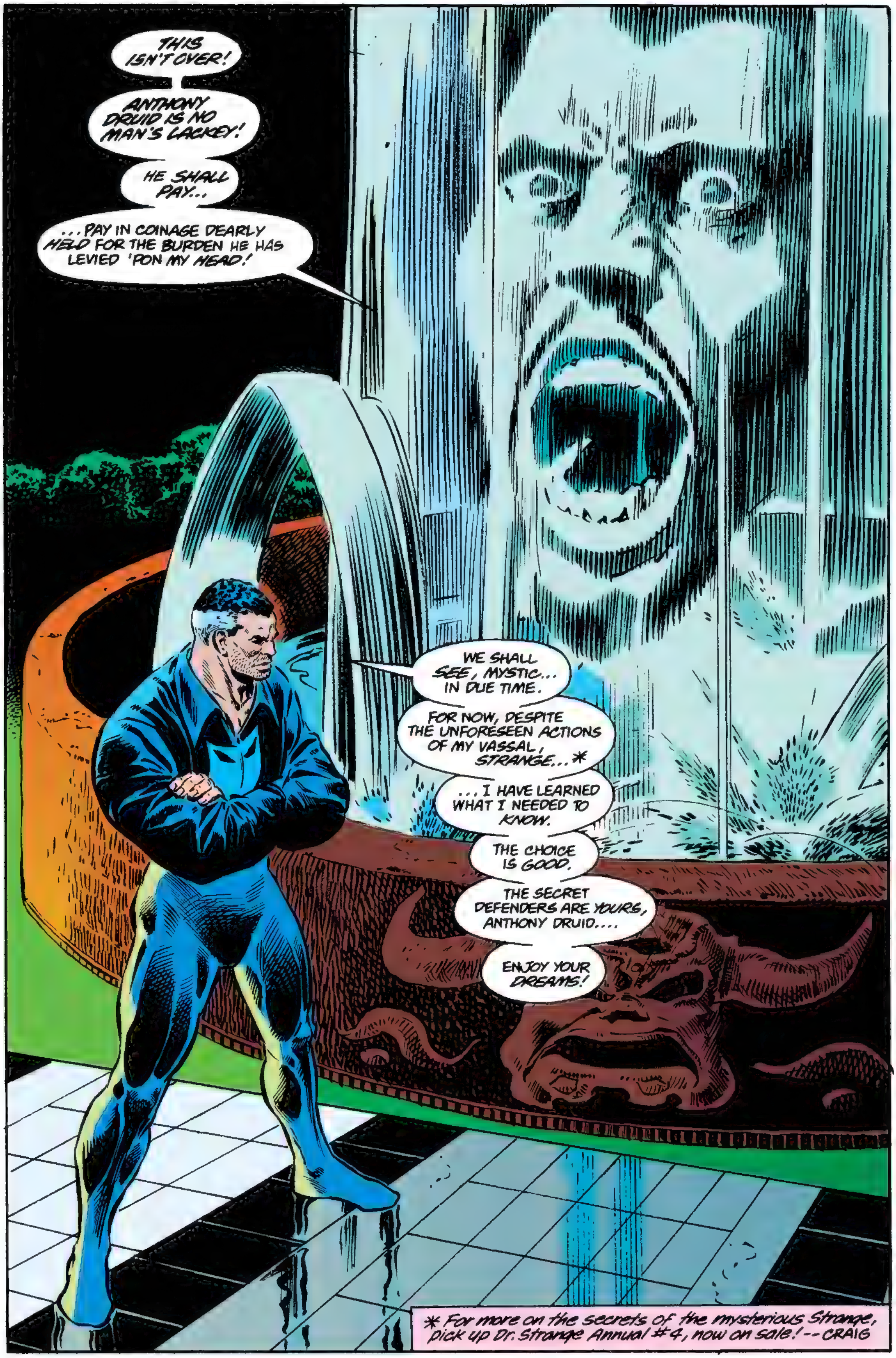

WHADDAYA SAY YOU GIVE UP AN' WE CALL IT A NIGHT, DOC?
I'M MISSING LETTERMAN AS IT IS!
CAREFUL, DEADPOOL! IF THAT'S REALLY DOCTOR STRANGE, HE'S MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU KNOW!
THANKS FOR THE DEAR ABBY, TOOTS...
...BUT I'M A PRETTY HARD MAN TO KILL!
SSSSHRAHH
NEED IT SPELLED OUT? I'LL DRAW YOU A DIAGRAM...
...ON DRACULA'S CHEST!
IIIIIPT
ARROGANT... HARLEQUIN!
YOUR WEAPONS...
...THIS SHADOWED ZONE OF NULL PERCEPTION...
...THEY ARE AS NOTHING!
I WOULD HAVE SPARED YOUR LIVES... IN VIEW OF YOUR SERVICE!
THEY'RE IGNORIN' ME!
CAN'T BLAME 'EM!
WITHOUT MY STRENGTH, I'M NOT MUCH OF A PLAYER!
BUT MAYBE I CAN USE THAT DISREGARD TO MY ADVANTAGE!
NOW...
...REAP WHAT YOU HAVE SOWN!
KRC
OOOOOOM!


BETRAYER!
YOU HAVE FORFEITED THE RIGHT TO WIELD THE MAGICKS OF GREAT AGAMOTTO! *
THOOM!
THE SWORD OF BONE SHALL NEVER BOW TO YOUR WILL...
...AND I WILL SEE YOU PUNISHED FOR YOUR ACTS OF DISRESPECT!
* In Doctor Strange #49 --CRAIG.
THOSE TWO WALKIN' NIGHTMARES ARE SO BUSY SETTLIN' OLD SCORES THAT THEY'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT THEY WERE FIGHTING OVER--
--THE MOEBIUS STONE!
BUT NOW THAT I'VE GOT THIS LITTLE BABY...
...WHAT THE HECK DO I DO WITH IT?
CAGE!
THE STONE...
...GIVE IT TO ME!
HUH. CAN'T SAY I MUCH TRUST YOU AFTER THAT NUMBER AT THE MUSEUM. *
USE YOUR INTELLECT, CAGE!
DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT BERSERKER WILL UNDO THE DAMAGE MALACHI HAS WROUGHT?
* Last ish! --CRAIG
TOUGH CALL.
I USED TO KNOW DOCTOR STRANGE ONCE.
BUT WHATEVER THAT THING REALLY IS...
...IT'S NOT DOCTOR STRANGE!
CATCH!

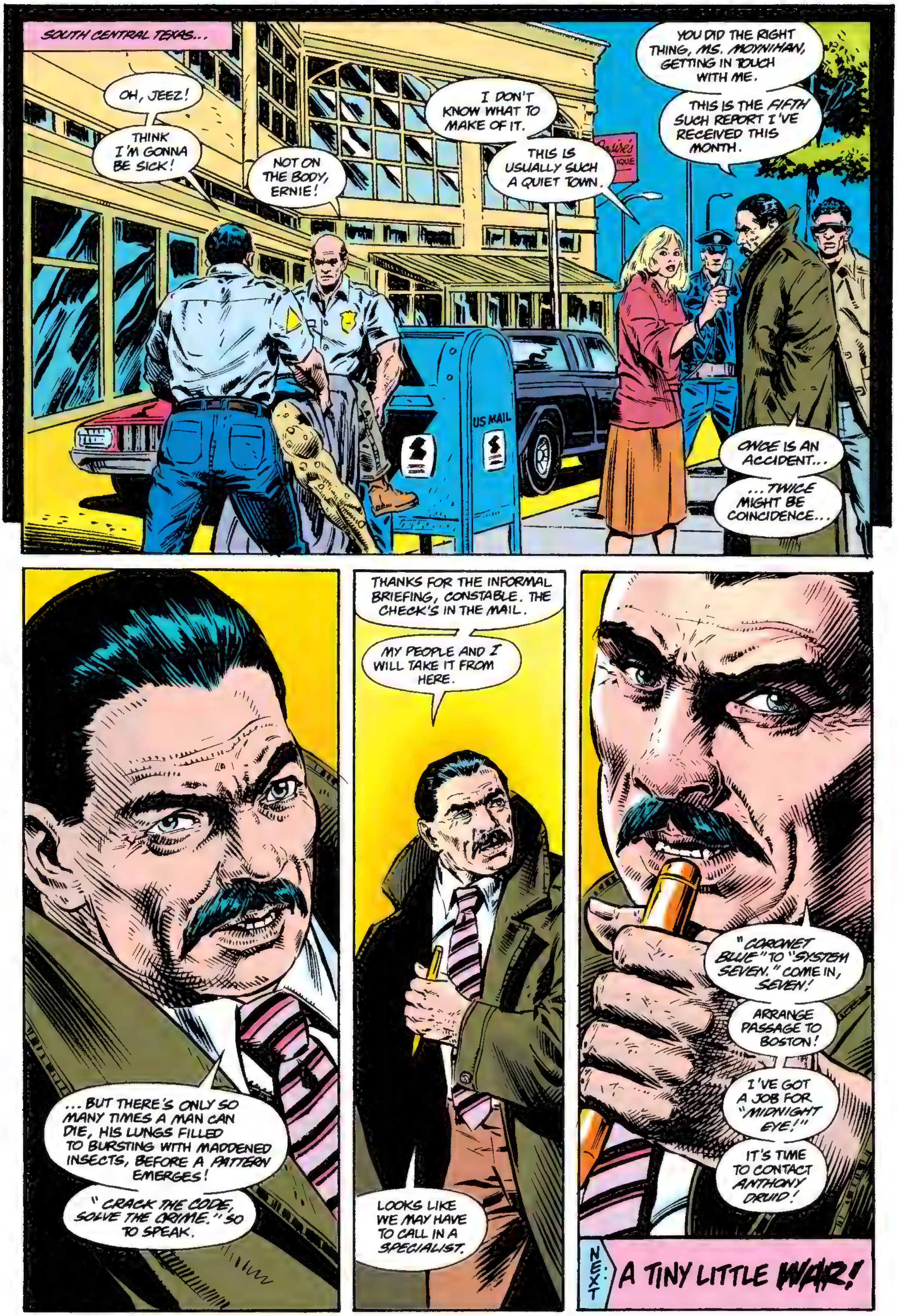

THE POWER...
WHAT I COULD ACCOMPLISH WITH SUCH MIGHT...!
IF ONLY...
DRUID!
WHAT ARE YOU... DOING?
RELEASE... THE STONE!
IT MUST... BE MINE!
YOU DESIRE THIS BAUBLE, STRANGE?
THEN MY CHOICE IS MADE!
I MUST TURN ITS DESTRUCTIVE ENERGIES INWARD UPON ITSELF.
LET THE STONE'S STATE OF BEING REGRESS...
...PAST THE DAY OF ITS SORCEROUS CREATION!
LET THAT WHICH WAS...
"...BE NO MORE!"

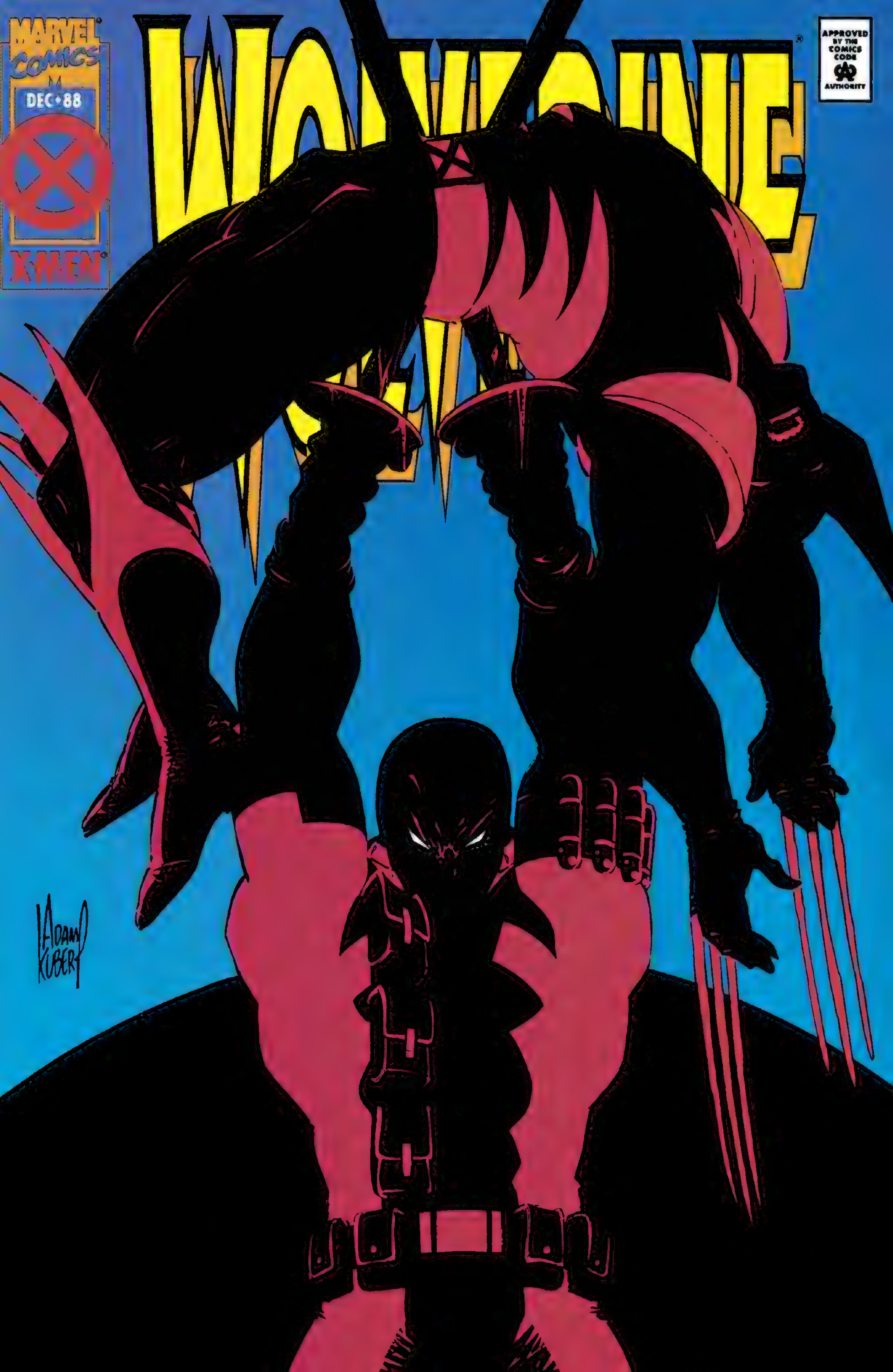

AND, ACROSS THE GLOBE, THE EFFECTS OF THE MOEBIUS STONE'S POWER MELT AWAY, LIKE SNOW COME SPRING.
I KILLED MY MOTHER FOR HER
THE ROAD IS ONCE MORE CLEAR AND STRAIGHT.
ANY OTHER CONDITION SEEMS NO MORE THAN A MOMENTARY DAY-DREAM.
PARENTS AND CHILDREN ARE JOYFULLY REUNITED.
NONE NEED GROW WORLDLY BEFORE THEIR TIME.
BUILDINGS STAND, AS THEY HAVE ALWAYS STOOD.
A TESTAMENT TO MAN'S TRIUMPH OVER THE FORCES OF ENVIRONMENT.
CONVERSATION AGAIN BECOMES A POSSIBILITY...
...AND, FOR SOME...
...A VIRTUAL CERTAINTY COME THE HARVEST.
LIFE, IN ALL ITS DIVERSITY, CONTINUES ITS STEADY MARCH FORWARD.
AS DOES TIME.
AS DOES DEATH.
FROM THAT ONE, FINAL CERTAINTY...
...THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER REPRIEVE.


YOU HAVE... UNMADE THE STONE.
ITS ENERGIES... NO LONGER FLOW.
I HAVE BEEN... DENIED.
AND KNOW, DEMON, THAT IT WAS DRUID WHO DENIED YOU, AND DERIVED INFINITE PLEASURE FROM THE DEED!
BETTER WATCH THE MOUTH, ANTHONY!
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GEARING UP FOR ROUND TWO!
THERE IS... NO NEED... FOR FURTHER CONFLICT.
THE PRIZE... IS LOST.
THAT'S IT?
NO "THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP?"
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, CAGE.
YOU GOT YOUR POWERS BACK WHEN THE STONE WENT BUST...
...AND A DE-POWERED FRAGMENT TO TAKE BACK TO THE MUSEUM!
LADY...
...IF THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN DO...
...NEXT TIME YOU GUYS NEED HELP, CALL SPIDER-MAN!
STRANGE!
TELL YOUR MASTER HE SHALL PAY FOR CURSING ME WITH HIS PAINFUL PRECOGNITIVE VISIONS*...
...FOR FORCING ME TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK!
*SEE SECRET DEFENDERS #15. --CRAIG


THIS ISN'T OVER!
ANTHONY DRUID IS NO MAN'S LACKEY!
HE SHALL PAY...
...PAY IN COINAGE DEARLY HELD FOR THE BURDEN HE HAS LEVIED 'PON MY HEAD!
WE SHALL SEE, MYSTIC... IN DUE TIME.
FOR NOW, DESPITE THE UNFORESEEN ACTIONS OF MY VASSAL, STRANGE...*
...I HAVE LEARNED WHAT I NEEDED TO KNOW.
THE CHOICE IS GOOD.
THE SECRET DEFENDERS ARE YOURS, ANTHONY DRUID....
ENJOY YOUR DREAMS!

* For more on the secrets of the mysterious Strange, pick up Dr. Strange Annual #4, now on sale! --CRAIG


SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS...
OH, JEEZ!
THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK!
NOT ON THE BODY, ERNIE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.
THIS IS USUALLY SUCH A QUIET TOWN.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, MS. MOYNIHAN, GETTING IN TOUCH WITH ME.
THIS IS THE FIFTH SUCH REPORT I'VE RECEIVED THIS MONTH.
US MAIL
ONCE IS AN ACCIDENT...
...TWICE MIGHT BE COINCIDENCE...
...BUT THERE'S ONLY SO MANY TIMES A MAN CAN DIE, HIS LUNGS FILLED TO BURSTING WITH MADDENED INSECTS, BEFORE A PATTERN EMERGES!
"CRACK THE CODE, SOLVE THE CRIME," SO TO SPEAK.
THANKS FOR THE INFORMAL BRIEFING, CONSTABLE. THE CHECK'S IN THE MAIL.
MY PEOPLE AND I WILL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
LOOKS LIKE WE MAY HAVE TO CALL IN A SPECIALIST.
"CORONET BLUE" TO "SYSTEM SEVEN." COME IN, SEVEN!
ARRANGE PASSAGE TO BOSTON!
I'VE GOT A JOB FOR "MIDNIGHT EYE!"
IT'S TIME TO CONTACT ANTHONY DRUID!
NEXT
A TINY LITTLE WAR!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M
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X-MEN
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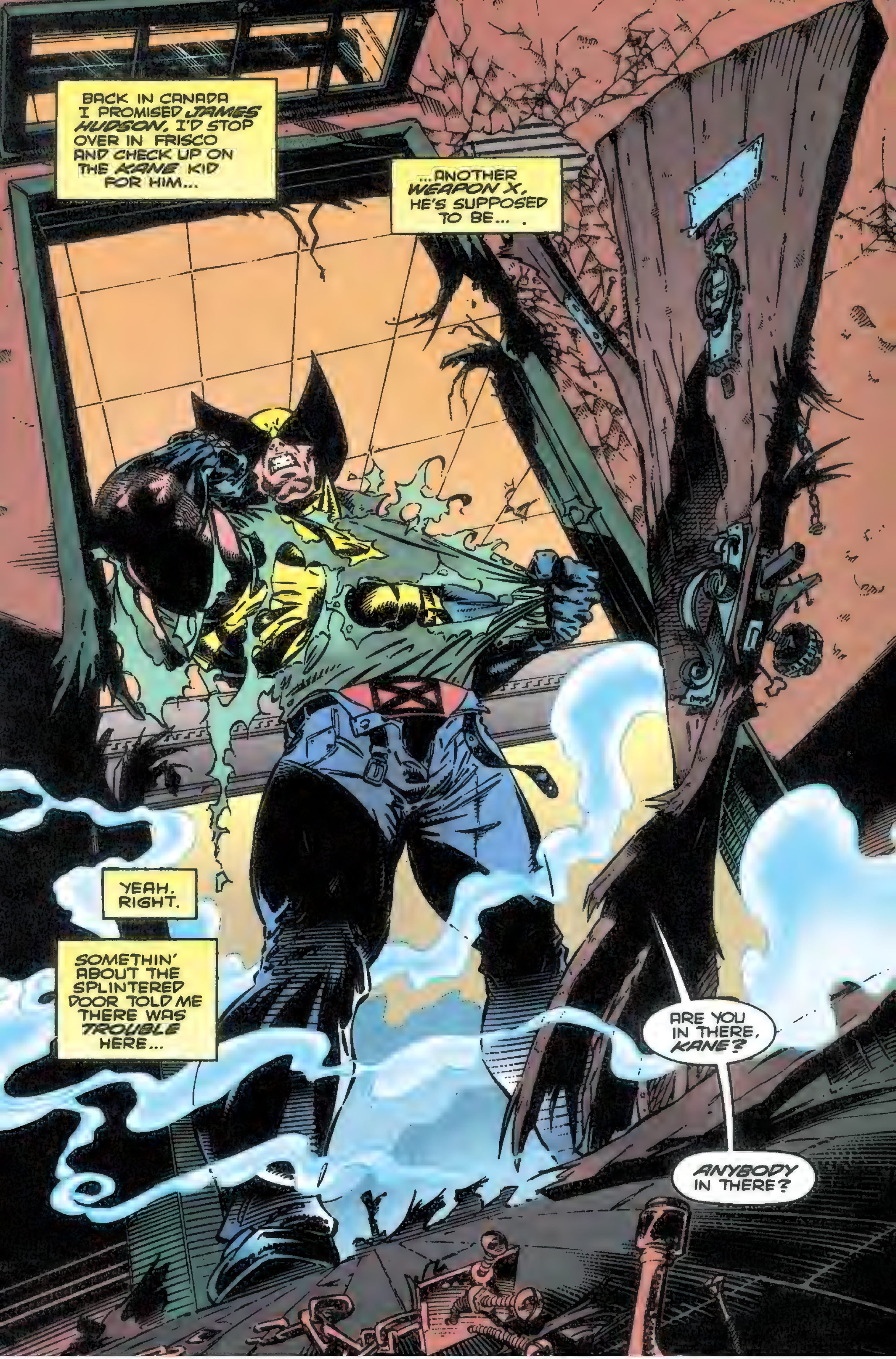
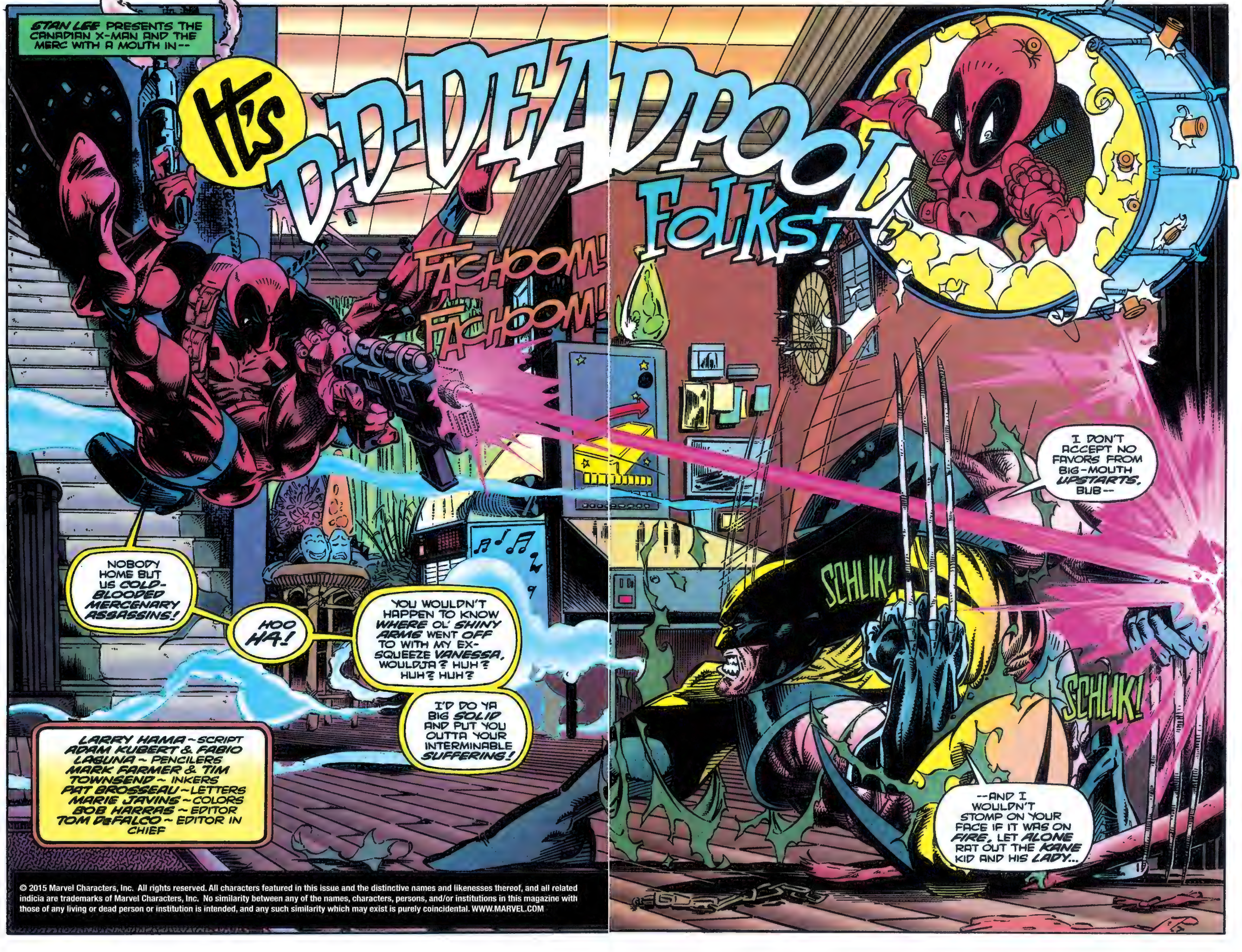
ADAM KUBERT


BACK IN CANADA I PROMISED *JAMES HUDSON*, I'D STOP OVER IN FRISCO AND CHECK UP ON THE *KANE* KID FOR HIM...
...ANOTHER *WEAPON X*, HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE... .
YEAH. RIGHT.
SOMETHIN' ABOUT THE SPLINTERED DOOR TOLD ME THERE WAS *TROUBLE* HERE...
ARE YOU IN THERE, *KANE*?
ANYBODY IN THERE?


STAN LEE PRESENTS THE CANADIAN X-MAN AND THE MERC WITH A MOUTH IN--
IT'S D-D-DEADPOOL FOLKS!
FACHOOM! FACHOOM!
NOBODY HOME BUT US COLD-BLOODED MERCENARY ASSASSINS!
HOO HA!
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE OL' SHINY ARMS WENT OFF TO WITH MY EX-SQUEEZE VANESSA, WOULDJA? HUH? HUH? HUH?
I'D DO YA BIG SOLID AND PUT YOU OUTTA YOUR INTERMINABLE SUFFERING!
I DON'T ACCEPT NO FAVORS FROM BIG-MOUTH UPSTARTS, BUB--
SCHLIK!
SCHLIK!
--AND I WOULDN'T STOMP ON YOUR FACE IF IT WAS ON FIRE, LET ALONE RAT OUT THE KANE KID AND HIS LADY...

LARRY HAMA ~ SCRIPT
ADAM KUBERT & FABIO LAGUNA ~ PENCILERS
MARK FARMER & TIM TOWNSEND ~ INKERS
PAT BROSSEAU ~ LETTERS
MARIE JAVINS ~ COLORS
BOB HARRAS ~ EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO ~ EDITOR IN CHIEF

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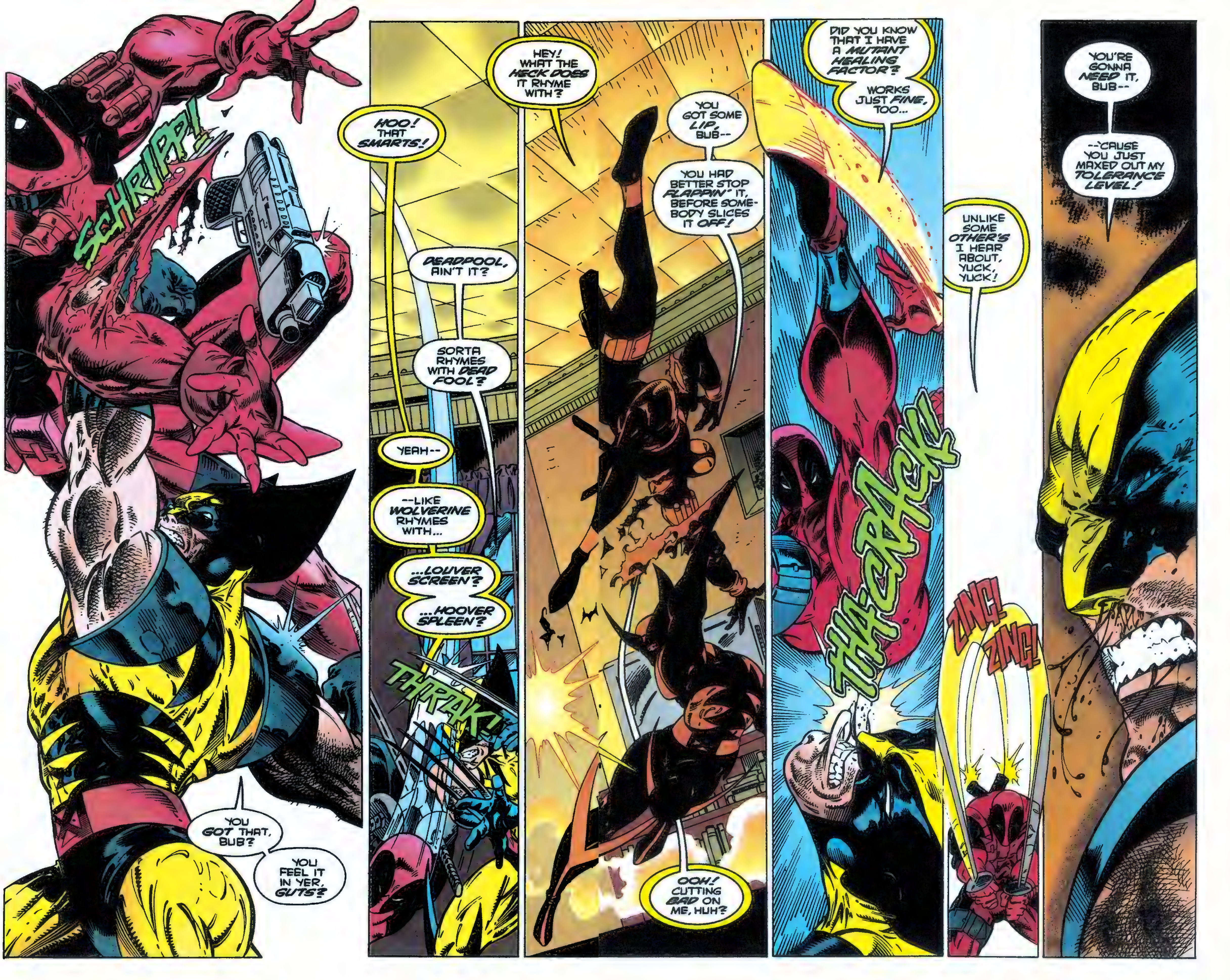
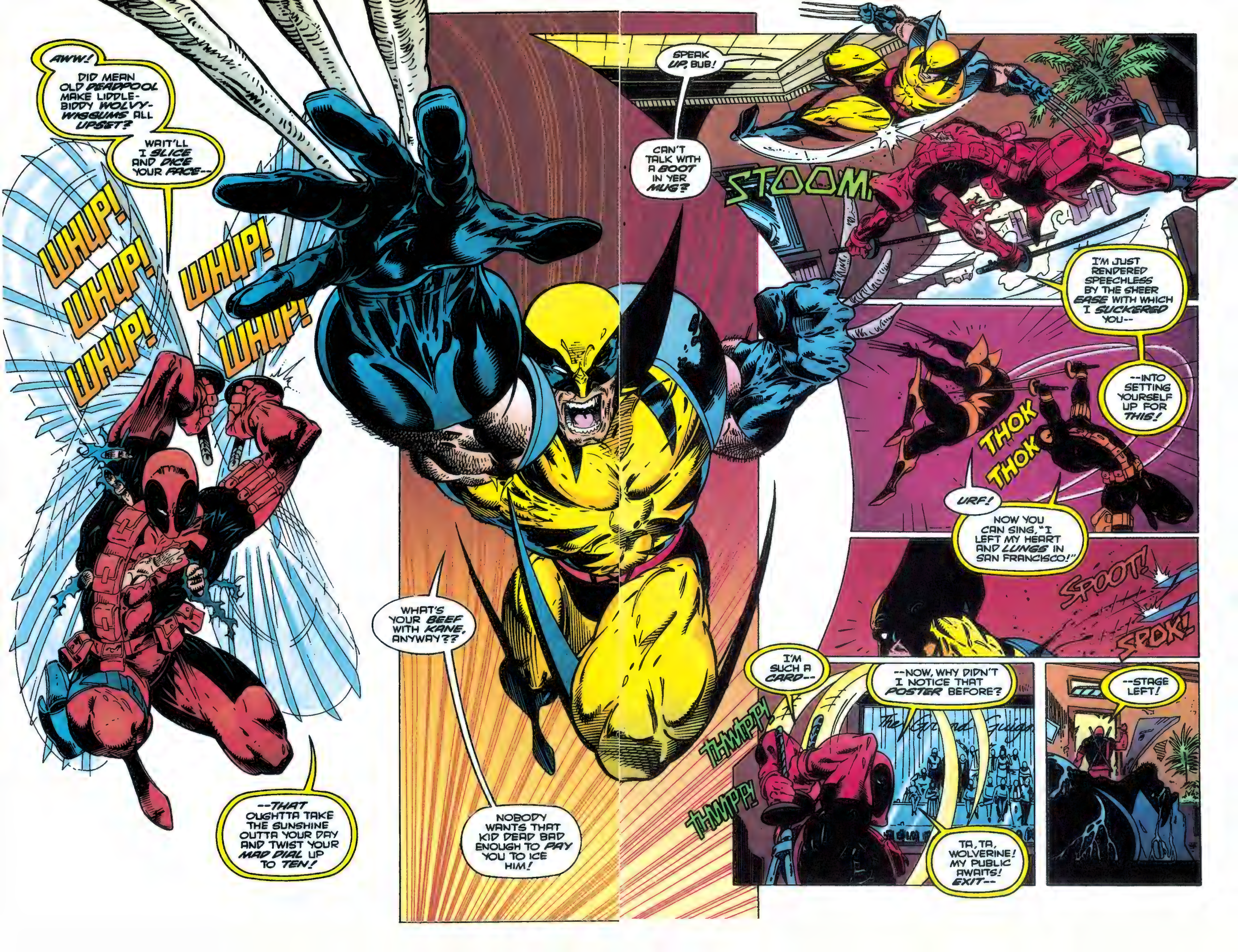
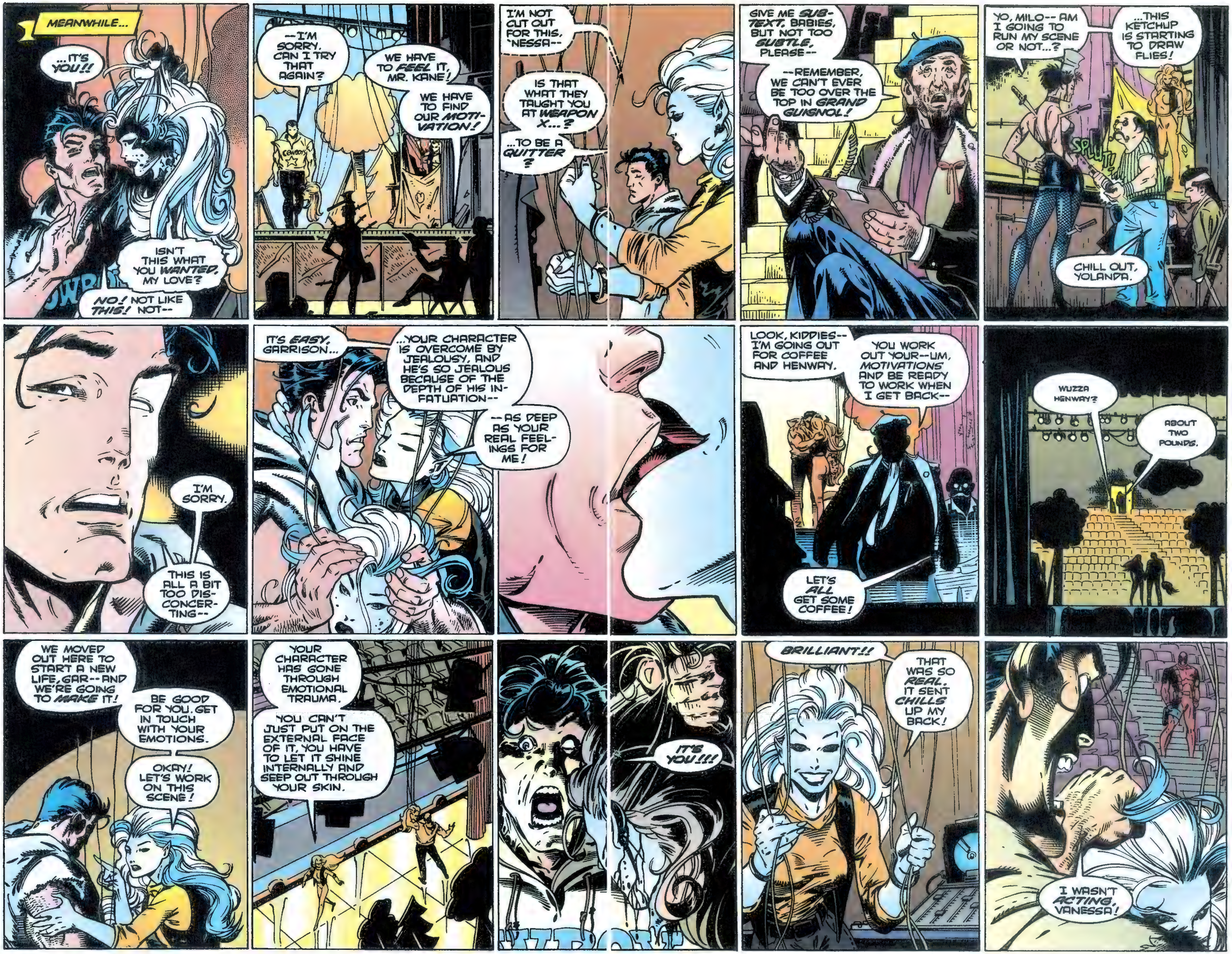
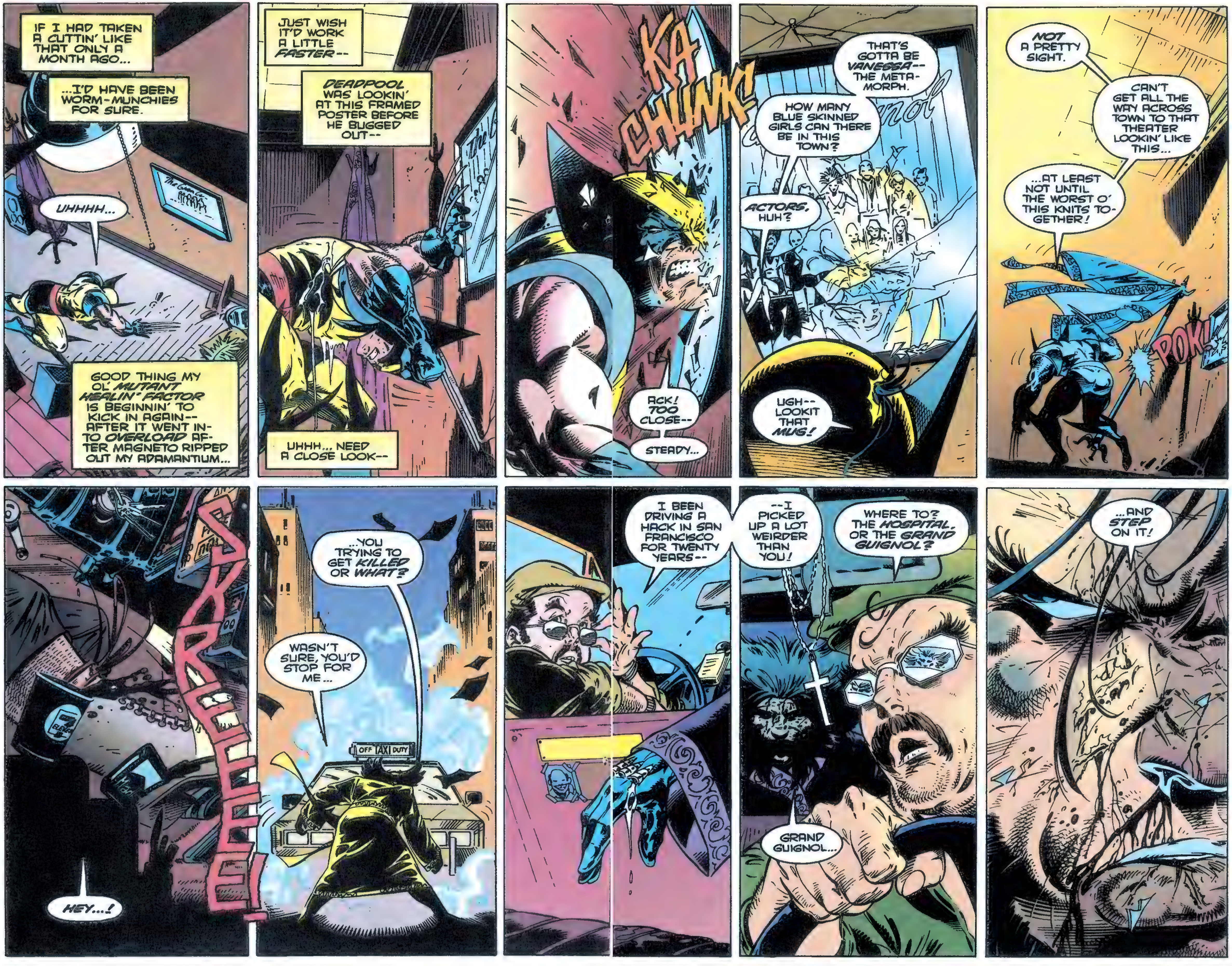
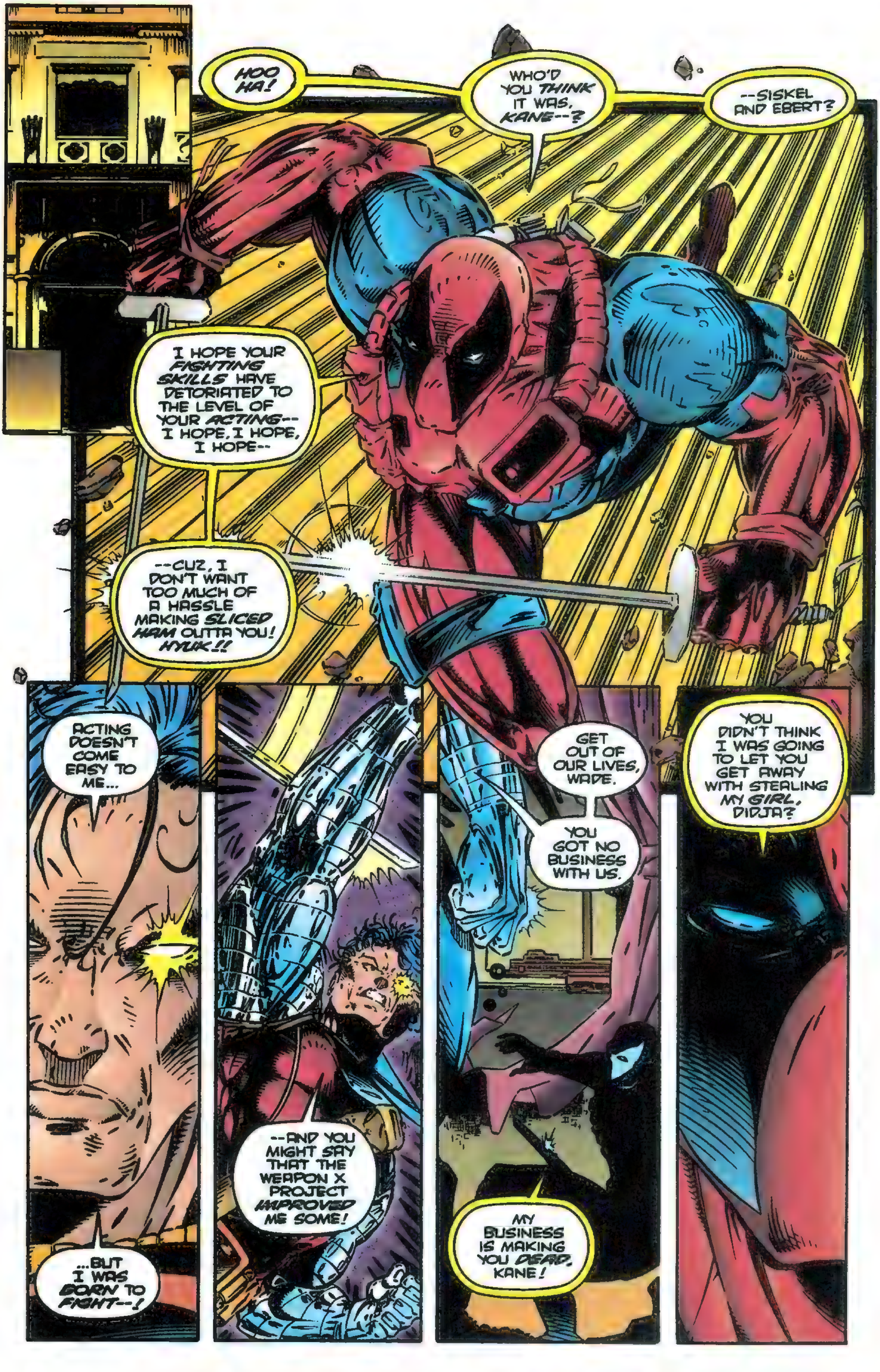
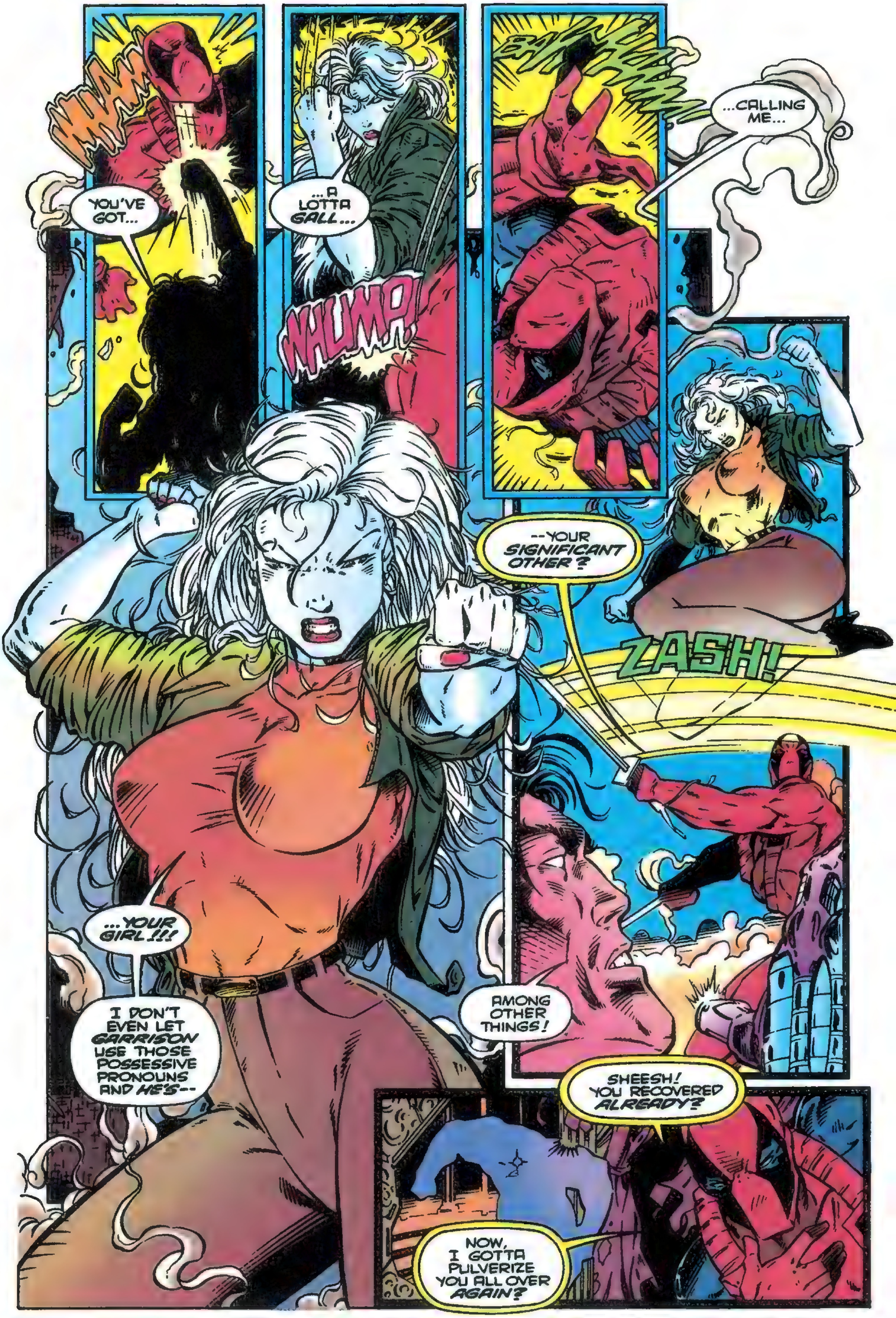

SCHRIPP!
YOU GOT THAT, BUB?
YOU FEEL IT IN YER GUTS?
HOO! THAT SMARTS!
DEADPOOL, AIN'T IT?
SORTA RHYMES WITH DEAD FOOL?
YEAH--
--LIKE WOLVERINE RHYMES WITH...
...LOUVER SCREEN?
...HOOVER SPLEEN?
THRAK!
HEY! WHAT THE HECK DOES IT RHYME WITH?
YOU GOT SOME LIP, BUB--
YOU HAD BETTER STOP FLAPPIN' IT, BEFORE SOMEBODY SLICES IT OFF!
OOH! CUTTING BAD ON ME, HUH?
DID YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE A MUTANT HEALING FACTOR?
WORKS JUST FINE, TOO...
THA-CRACK!
UNLIKE SOME OTHER'S I HEAR ABOUT, YUCK, YUCK!
ZING! ZING!
YOU'RE GONNA NEED IT, BUB--
--'CAUSE YOU JUST MAXED OUT MY TOLERANCE LEVEL!

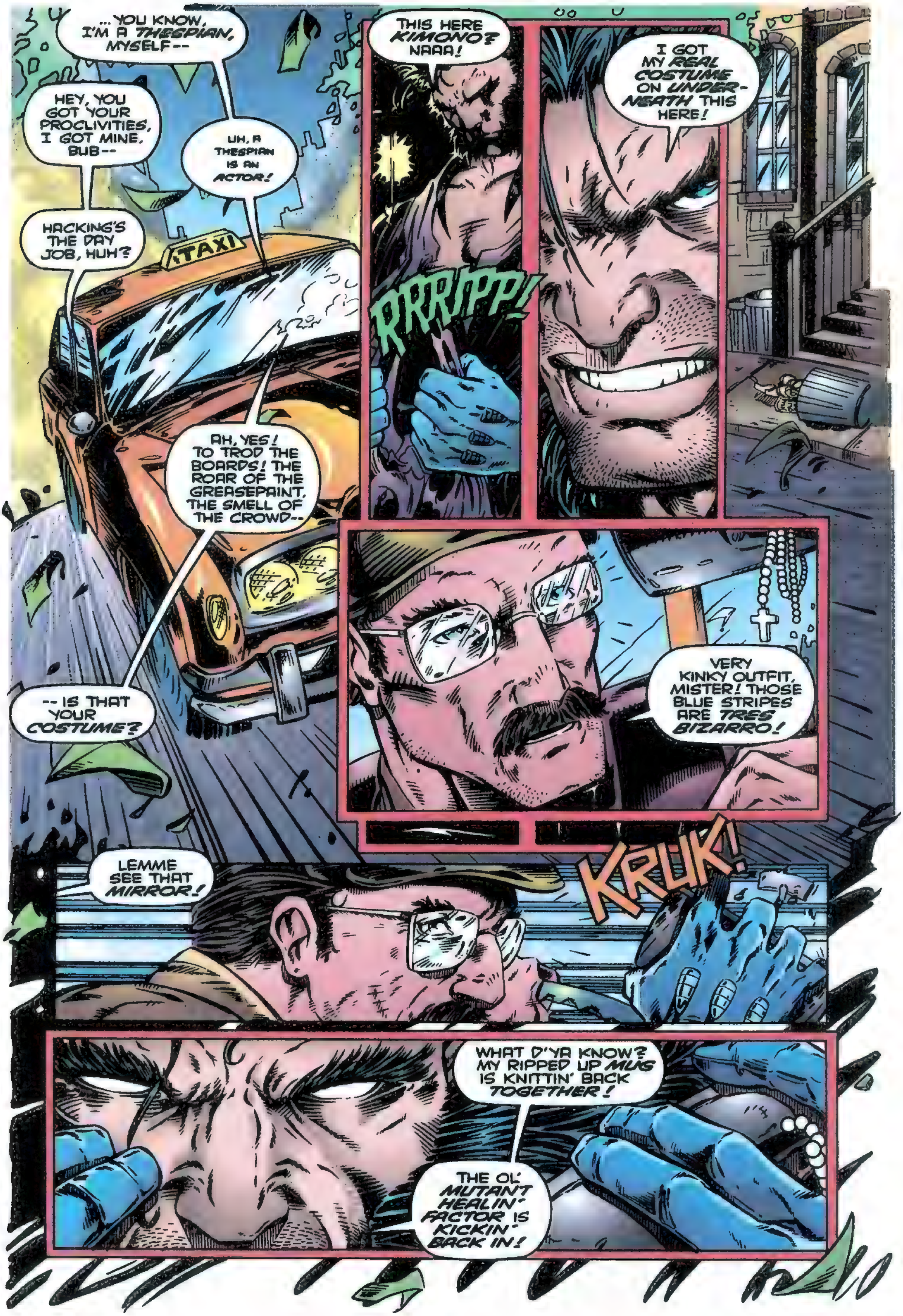

AWW! DID MEAN OLD DEADPOOL MAKE LIDDLE-BIDDY WOLVY-WIGGUMS ALL UPSET?
WAIT'LL I SLICE AND DICE YOUR FACE--
WHUP! WHUP! WHUP!
WHUP! WHUP!
--THAT OUGHTTA TAKE THE SUNSHINE OUTTA YOUR DAY AND TWIST YOUR MAD DIAL UP TO TEN!
WHAT'S YOUR BEEF WITH KANE, ANYWAY??
NOBODY WANTS THAT KID DEAD BAD ENOUGH TO PAY YOU TO ICE HIM!
SPEAK UP, BUB!
CAN'T TALK WITH A BOOT IN YER MUG?
STOOM
I'M JUST RENDERED SPEECHLESS BY THE SHEER EASE WITH WHICH I SUCKERED YOU--
--INTO SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR THIS!
THOK
THOK
URF!
NOW YOU CAN SING, "I LEFT MY HEART AND LUNGS IN SAN FRANCISCO!"
SPOOT!
SPOK!
I'M SUCH A CARD--
--NOW, WHY DIDN'T I NOTICE THAT POSTER BEFORE?
THMPP!
THMPP!
The Grand Guignol
TA, TA, WOLVERINE! MY PUBLIC AWAITS! EXIT--
--STAGE LEFT!

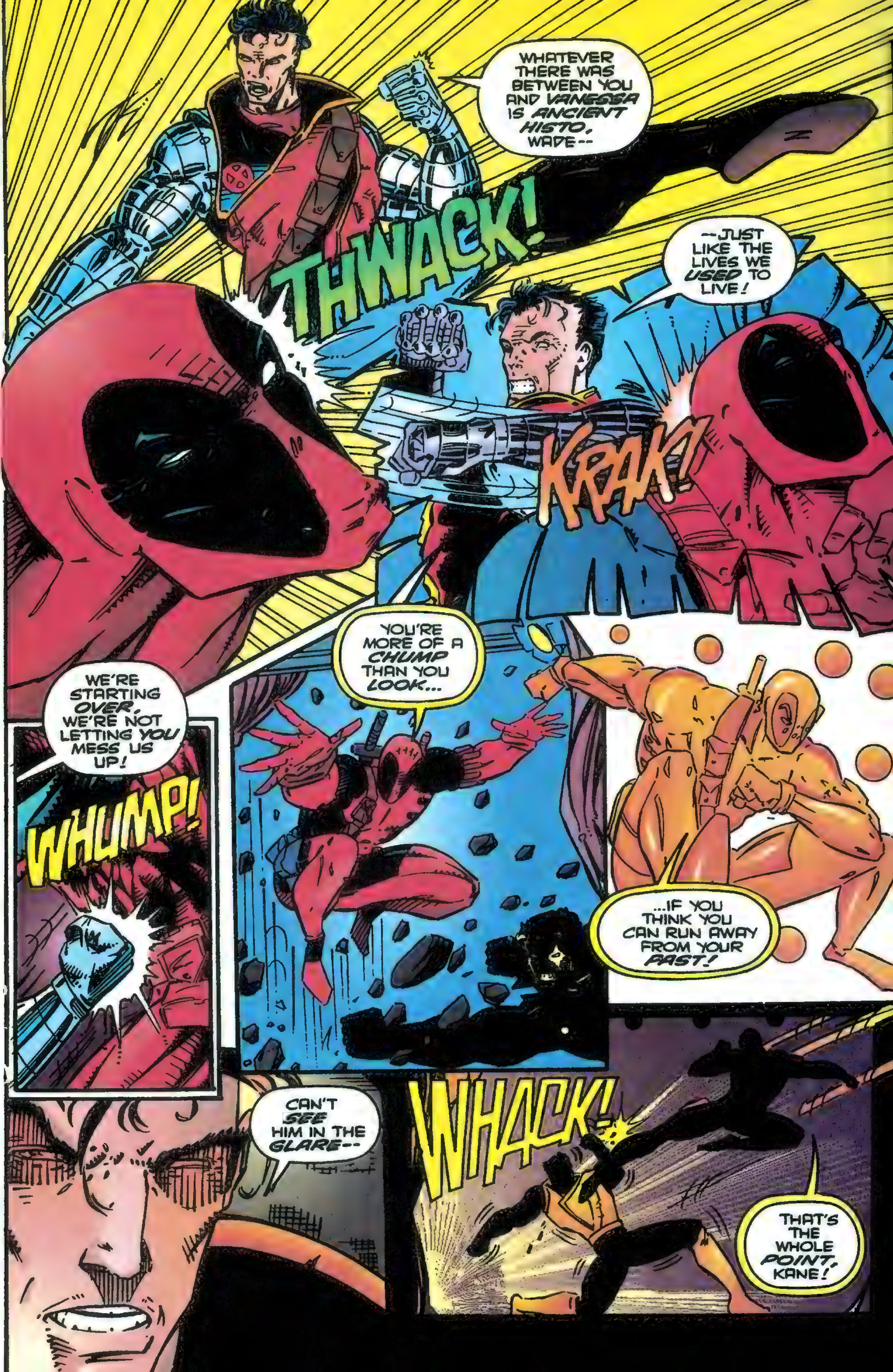

MEANWHILE...
...IT'S YOU!!
ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU WANTED, MY LOVE?
NO! NOT LIKE THIS! NOT--
--I'M SORRY. CAN I TRY THAT AGAIN?
WE HAVE TO FEEL IT, MR. KANE!
WE HAVE TO FIND OUR MOTIVATION!
I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THIS, 'NESSA--
IS THAT WHAT THEY TAUGHT YOU AT WEAPON X...?
...TO BE A QUITTER?
GIVE ME SUBTEXT, BABIES, BUT NOT TOO SUBTLE, PLEASE--
--REMEMBER, WE CAN'T EVER BE TOO OVER THE TOP IN GRAND GUIGNOL!
YO, MILO-- AM I GOING TO RUN MY SCENE OR NOT...?
...THIS KETCHUP IS STARTING TO DRAW FLIES!
SPLUT!
CHILL OUT, YOLANDA.
I'M SORRY.
THIS IS ALL A BIT TOO DISCONCERTING--
IT'S EASY, GARRISON...
...YOUR CHARACTER IS OVERCOME BY JEALOUSY, AND HE'S SO JEALOUS BECAUSE OF THE DEPTH OF HIS INFATUATION--
--AS DEEP AS YOUR REAL FEELINGS FOR ME!
LOOK, KIDDIES-- I'M GOING OUT FOR COFFEE AND HENWAY.
YOU WORK OUT YOUR--UM, MOTIVATIONS AND BE READY TO WORK WHEN I GET BACK--
LET'S ALL GET SOME COFFEE!
WUZZA HENWAY?
ABOUT TWO POUNDS.
WE MOVED OUT HERE TO START A NEW LIFE, GAR--AND WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT!
BE GOOD FOR YOU, GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR EMOTIONS.
OKAY! LET'S WORK ON THIS SCENE!
YOUR CHARACTER HAS GONE THROUGH EMOTIONAL TRAUMA.
YOU CAN'T JUST PUT ON THE EXTERNAL FACE OF IT, YOU HAVE TO LET IT SHINE INTERNALLY AND SEEP OUT THROUGH YOUR SKIN.
IT'S YOU!!!
BRILLIANT!!
THAT WAS SO REAL, IT SENT CHILLS UP MY BACK!
I WASN'T ACTING, VANESSA!

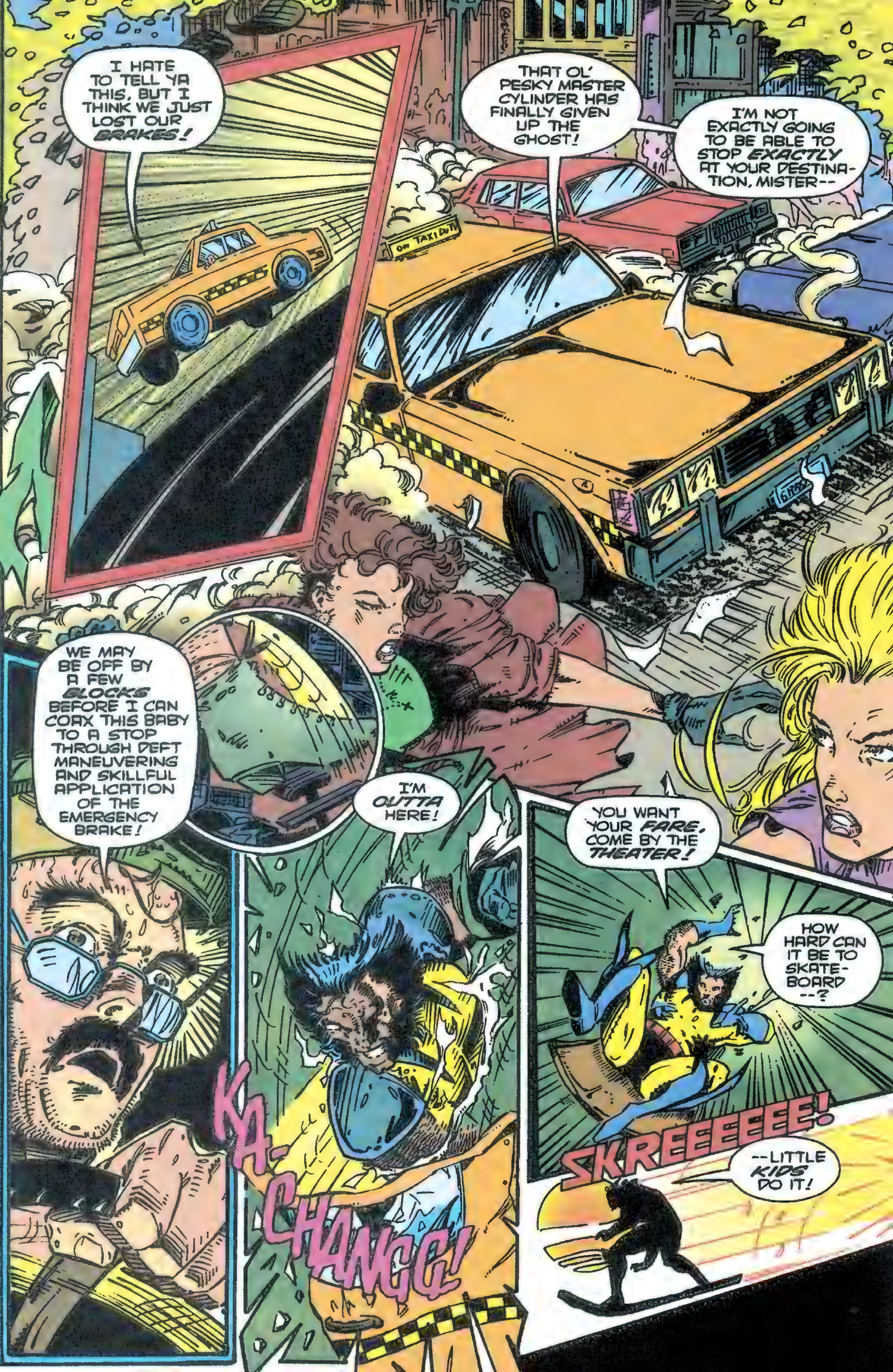

IF I HAD TAKEN A CUTTIN' LIKE THAT ONLY A MONTH AGO...
...I'D HAVE BEEN WORM-MUNCHIES FOR SURE.
UHHHH...
GOOD THING MY OL' MUTANT HEALIN' FACTOR IS BEGINNIN' TO KICK IN AGAIN--AFTER IT WENT INTO OVERLOAD AFTER MAGNETO RIPPED OUT MY ADAMANTIUM...
JUST WISH IT'D WORK A LITTLE FASTER--
DEADPOOL WAS LOOKIN' AT THIS FRAMED POSTER BEFORE HE BUGGED OUT--
UHHH... NEED A CLOSE LOOK--
KA CHUNK!
ACK! TOO CLOSE--
STEADY...
THAT'S GOTTA BE VANESSA--THE METAMORPH.
HOW MANY BLUE SKINNED GIRLS CAN THERE BE IN THIS TOWN?
ACTORS, HUH?
UGH--LOOKIT THAT MUG!
NOT A PRETTY SIGHT.
CAN'T GET ALL THE WAY ACROSS TOWN TO THAT THEATER LOOKIN' LIKE THIS...
...AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE WORST O' THIS KNITS TOGETHER!
POK!
SKREEEEE!
HEY...!
...YOU TRYING TO GET KILLED OR WHAT?
WASN'T SURE, YOU'D STOP FOR ME...
OFF TAXI DUTY
I BEEN DRIVING A HACK IN SAN FRANCISCO FOR TWENTY YEARS--
--I PICKED UP A LOT WEIRDER THAN YOU!
WHERE TO? THE HOSPITAL, OR THE GRAND GUIGNOL?
GRAND GUIGNOL...
...AND STEP ON IT!

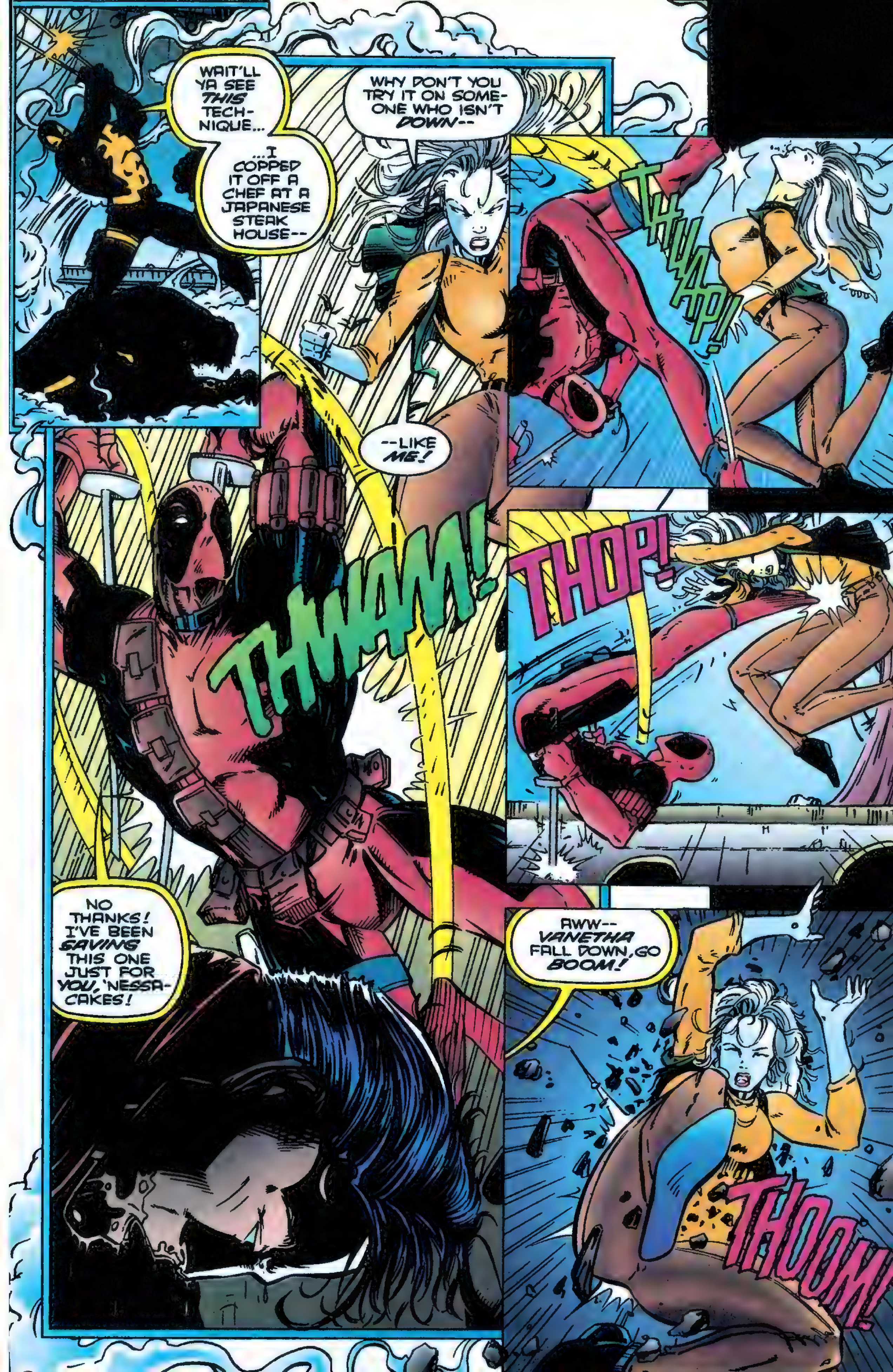

HOO HA!
WHO'D YOU THINK IT WAS, KANE--?
--SISKEL AND EBERT?
I HOPE YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS HAVE DETORIATED TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR ACTING-- I HOPE, I HOPE, I HOPE--
--CUZ, I DON'T WANT TOO MUCH OF A HASSLE MAKING SLICED HAM OUTTA YOU! HYUK!!
ACTING DOESN'T COME EASY TO ME...
...BUT I WAS BORN TO FIGHT--!
--AND YOU MIGHT SAY THAT THE WEAPON X PROJECT IMPROVED ME SOME!
GET OUT OF OUR LIVES, WADE.
YOU GOT NO BUSINESS WITH US.
MY BUSINESS IS MAKING YOU DEAD, KANE!
YOU DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH STEALING MY GIRL, DIDJA?

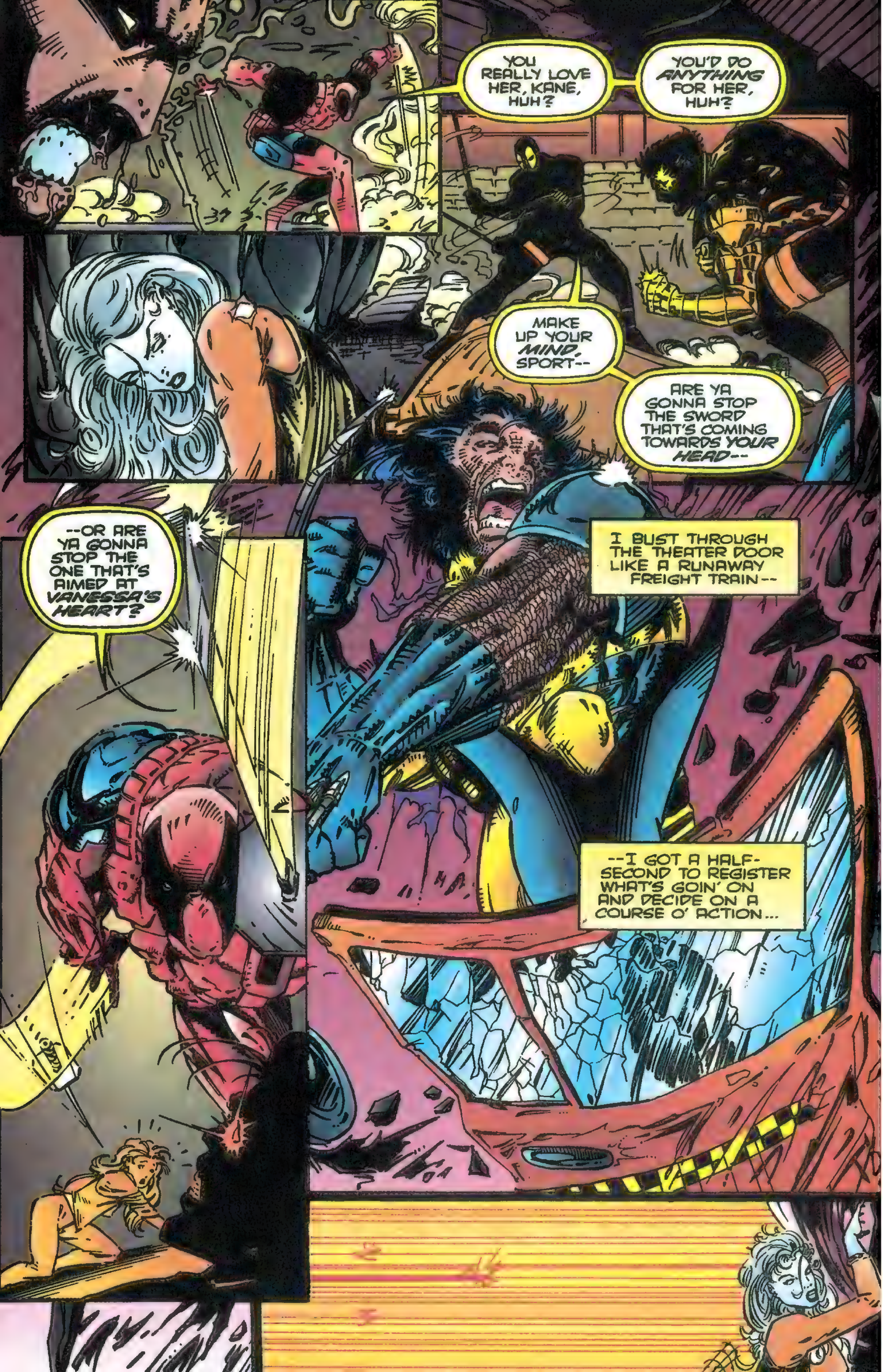

WHAM!
YOU'VE GOT...
...A LOTTA GALL...
WHUMP!
...CALLING ME...
--YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER?
ZASH!
...YOUR GIRL!!!
I DON'T EVEN LET GARRISON USE THOSE POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS AND HE'S--
AMONG OTHER THINGS!
SHEESH! YOU RECOVERED ALREADY?
NOW, I GOTTA PULVERIZE YOU ALL OVER AGAIN?

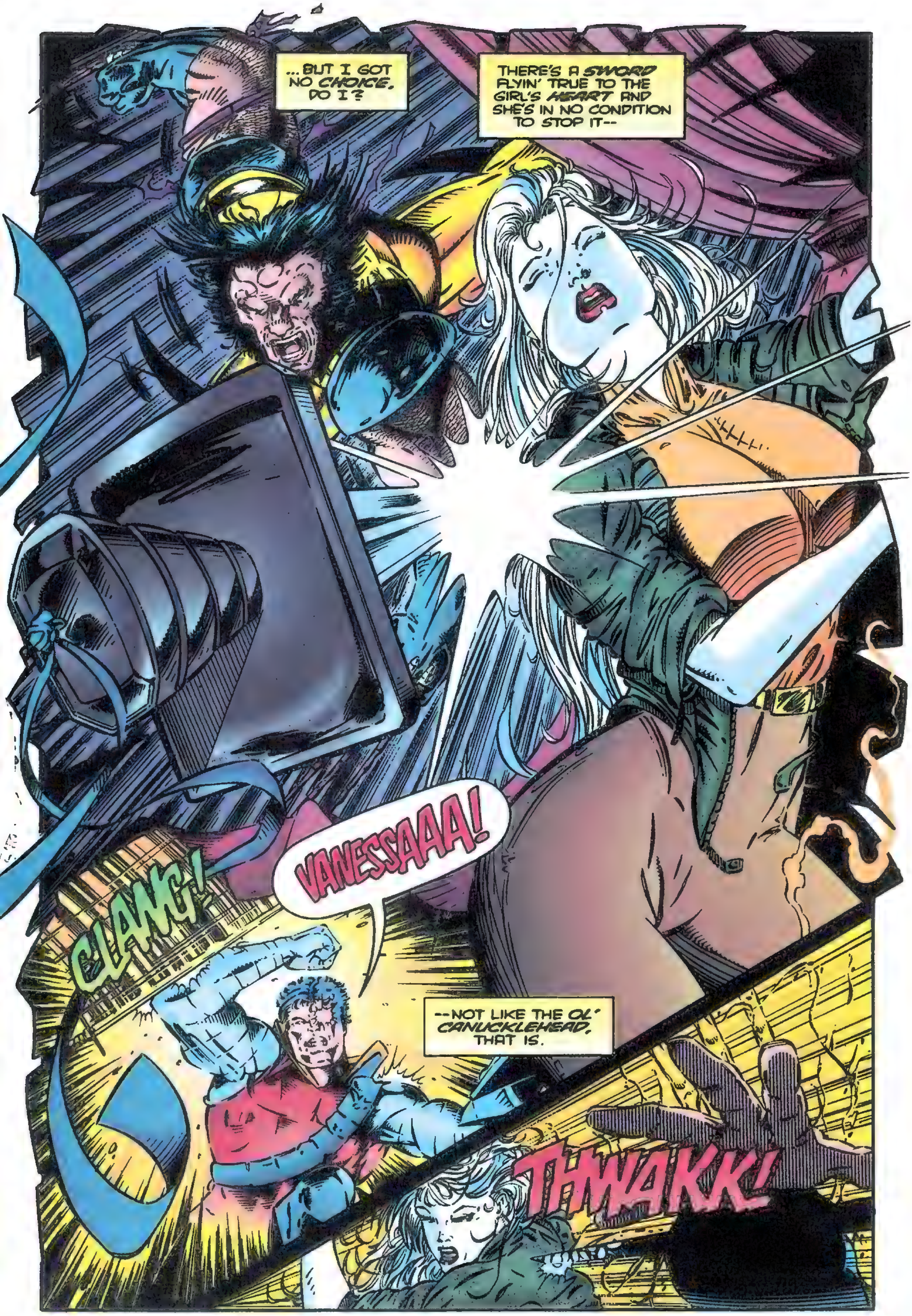

...YOU KNOW, I'M A *THESPIAN*, MYSELF--
HEY, YOU GOT YOUR PROCLIVITIES, I GOT MINE, BUB--
UH, A THESPIAN IS AN *ACTOR!*
TAXI
HACKING'S THE DAY JOB, HUH?
AH, YES! TO TROD THE BOARDS! THE ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT, THE SMELL OF THE CROWD--
--IS THAT YOUR *COSTUME?*
THIS HERE *KIMONO?* NAAA!
RRRIPP!
I GOT MY *REAL COSTUME* ON *UNDERNEATH* THIS HERE!
VERY KINKY OUTFIT, MISTER! THOSE BLUE STRIPES ARE *TRES BIZARRO!*
LEMME SEE THAT *MIRROR!*
KRUK!
WHAT D'YA KNOW? MY RIPPED UP *MUG* IS KNITTIN' BACK *TOGETHER!*
THE OL' *MUTANT HEALIN' FACTOR* IS *KICKIN' BACK IN!*

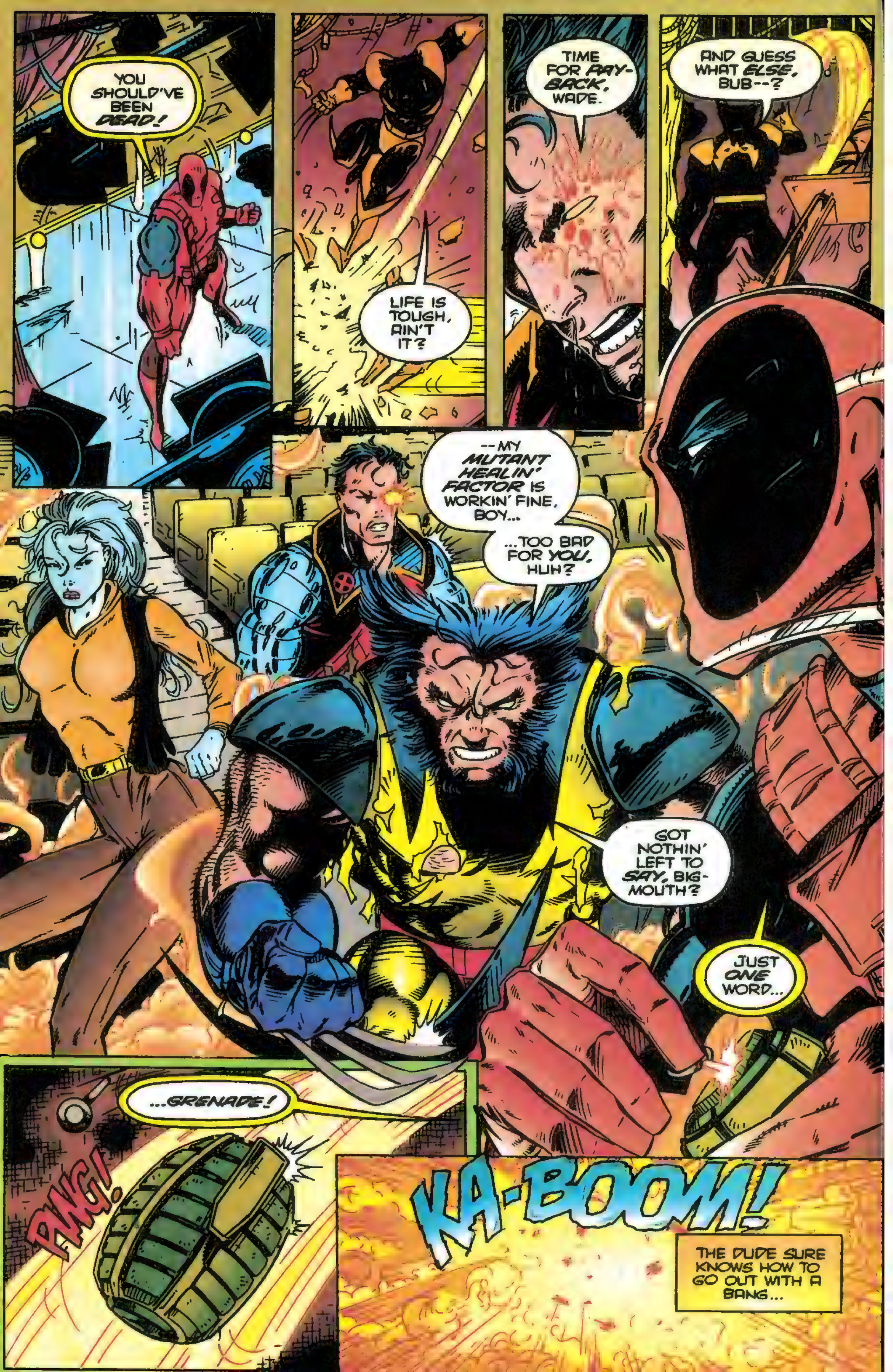

WHATEVER THERE WAS BETWEEN YOU AND *VANESSA* IS *ANCIENT HISTO,* WADE--
THWACK!
--JUST LIKE THE LIVES WE *USED* TO LIVE!
KRAK!
YOU'RE MORE OF A *CHUMP* THAN YOU *LOOK*...
WE'RE STARTING *OVER.* WE'RE NOT LETTING *YOU* MESS US UP!
WHUMP!
...IF YOU THINK YOU CAN RUN AWAY FROM YOUR *PAST!*
CAN'T *SEE* HIM IN THE *GLARE*--
WHACK!
THAT'S THE WHOLE *POINT,* KANE!

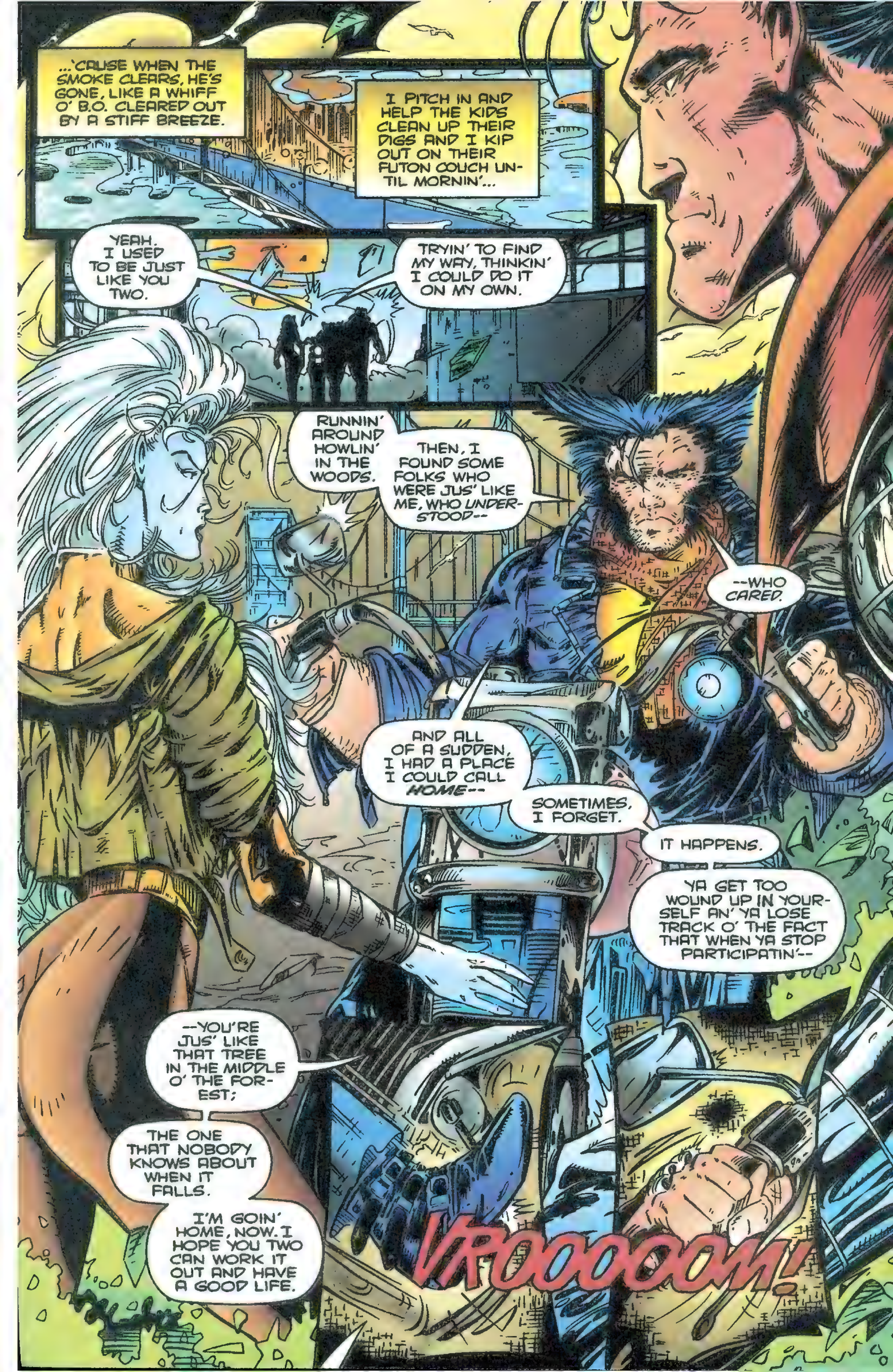

I HATE TO TELL YA THIS, BUT I THINK WE JUST LOST OUR *BRAKES!*
THAT OL' PESKY MASTER CYLINDER HAS FINALLY GIVEN UP THE GHOST!
I'M NOT EXACTLY GOING TO BE ABLE TO STOP *EXACTLY* AT YOUR DESTINATION, MISTER--
ON TAXI DUTY
WE MAY BE OFF BY A FEW *BLOCKS* BEFORE I CAN COAX THIS BABY TO A STOP THROUGH DEFT MANEUVERING AND SKILLFUL APPLICATION OF THE EMERGENCY BRAKE!
I'M *OUTTA* HERE!
YOU WANT YOUR *FARE,* COME BY THE *THEATER!*
HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO SKATEBOARD--?
KA-CHANGG!
SKREEEEEEE!
--LITTLE *KIDS* DO IT!

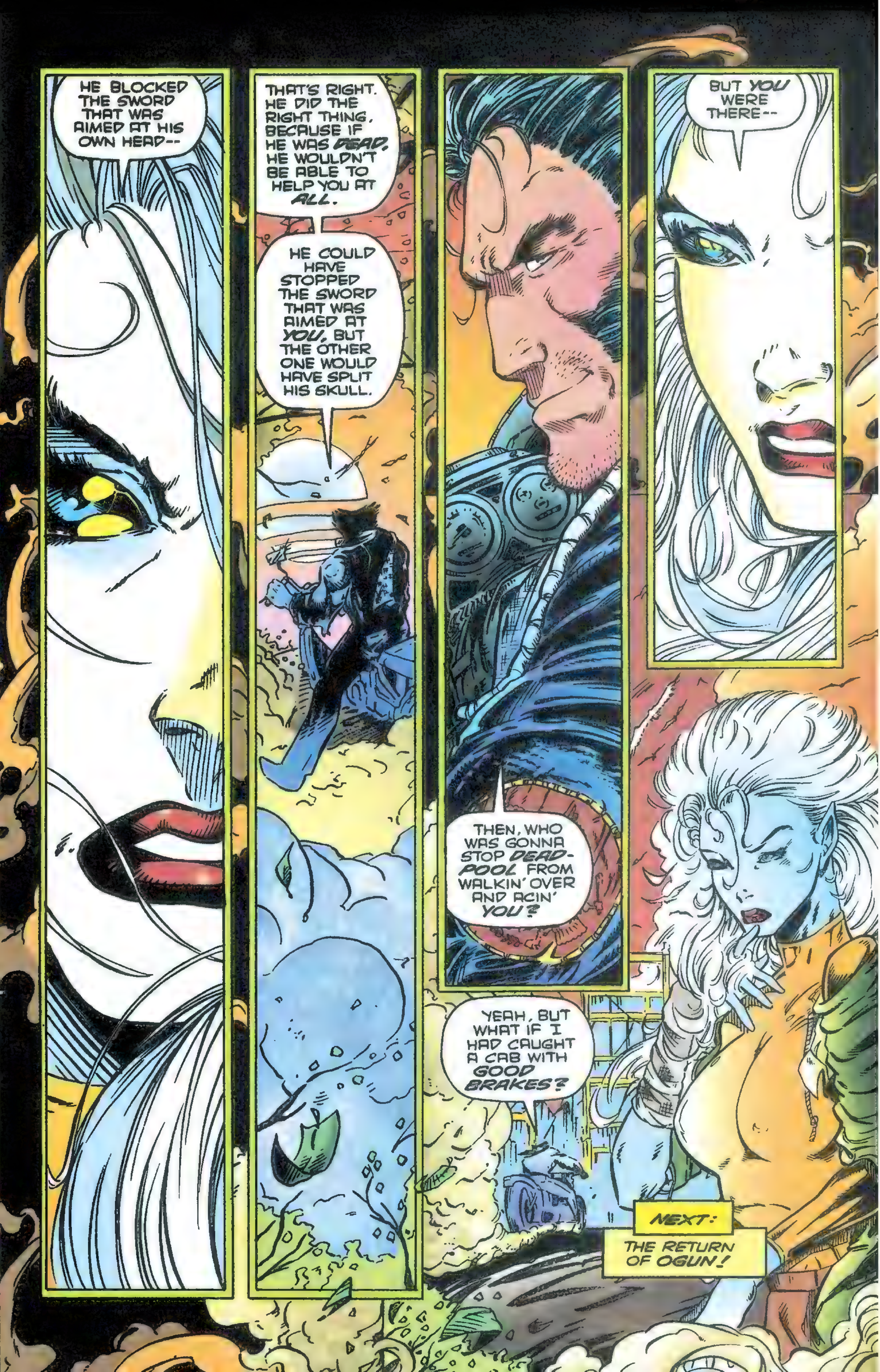

WAIT'LL YA SEE *THIS* TECHNIQUE...
...I COPPED IT OFF A CHEF AT A JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE--
WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT ON SOMEONE WHO ISN'T *DOWN*--
--LIKE *ME!*
THWAP!!
THWAM!
THOP!
NO THANKS! I'VE BEEN *SAVING* THIS ONE JUST FOR *YOU,* 'NESSA-CAKES!
AWW-- *VANETHA* FALL DOWN, GO *BOOM!*
THOOM!


YOU REALLY LOVE HER, KANE, HUH?
YOU'D DO *ANYTHING* FOR HER, HUH?
MAKE UP YOUR *MIND,* SPORT--
ARE YA GONNA STOP THE SWORD THAT'S COMING TOWARDS *YOUR HEAD*--
--OR ARE YA GONNA STOP THE ONE THAT'S AIMED AT *VANESSA'S HEART?*
I BUST THROUGH THE THEATER DOOR LIKE A RUNAWAY FREIGHT TRAIN--
--I GOT A HALF-SECOND TO REGISTER WHAT'S GOIN' ON AND DECIDE ON A COURSE O' ACTION...


...BUT I GOT NO *CHOICE*, DO I?
THERE'S A *SWORD* FLYIN' TRUE TO THE GIRL'S *HEART* AND SHE'S IN NO CONDITION TO STOP IT--
VANESSAAA!
CLANG!
--NOT LIKE THE *OL' CANUCKLEHEAD*, THAT IS.
THWAKK!


YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN *DEAD!*
LIFE IS TOUGH, AIN'T IT?
TIME FOR *PAY-BACK,* WADE.
AND GUESS WHAT *ELSE,* BUB--?
--MY *MUTANT HEALIN' FACTOR* IS WORKIN' FINE, BOY...
...TOO BAD FOR *YOU,* HUH?
GOT NOTHIN' LEFT TO *SAY,* BIG-MOUTH?
JUST *ONE* WORD...
...GRENADE!
PANG!
KA-BOOM!
THE DUDE SURE KNOWS HOW TO GO OUT WITH A BANG...


...'CAUSE WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS, HE'S GONE, LIKE A WHIFF O' B.O. CLEARED OUT BY A STIFF BREEZE.
I PITCH IN AND HELP THE KIDS CLEAN UP THEIR DIGS AND I KIP OUT ON THEIR FUTON COUCH UNTIL MORNIN'...
YEAH. I USED TO BE JUST LIKE YOU TWO.
TRYIN' TO FIND MY WAY, THINKIN' I COULD DO IT ON MY OWN.
RUNNIN' AROUND HOWLIN' IN THE WOODS.
THEN, I FOUND SOME FOLKS WHO WERE JUS' LIKE ME, WHO *UNDERSTOOD*--
--WHO *CARED.*
AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, I HAD A PLACE I COULD CALL *HOME*--
SOMETIMES, I FORGET.
IT HAPPENS.
YA GET TOO WOUND UP IN YOURSELF AN' YA LOSE TRACK O' THE FACT THAT WHEN YA STOP PARTICIPATIN'--
--YOU'RE JUS' LIKE THAT TREE IN THE MIDDLE O' THE FOREST;
THE ONE THAT NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT WHEN IT FALLS.
I'M GOIN' HOME, NOW. I HOPE YOU TWO CAN WORK IT OUT AND HAVE A GOOD LIFE.
VROOOOOOM!


HE BLOCKED THE SWORD THAT WAS AIMED AT HIS OWN HEAD--
THAT'S RIGHT. HE DID THE RIGHT THING, BECAUSE IF HE WAS *DEAD*, HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HELP YOU AT *ALL*.
HE COULD HAVE STOPPED THE SWORD THAT WAS AIMED AT *YOU*, BUT THE OTHER ONE WOULD HAVE SPLIT HIS SKULL.
BUT *YOU* WERE THERE--
THEN, WHO WAS GONNA STOP *DEAD-POOL* FROM WALKIN' OVER AND ACIN' *YOU*?
YEAH, BUT WHAT IF I HAD CAUGHT A CAB WITH *GOOD BRAKES*?
NEXT:
THE RETURN OF *OGUN!*

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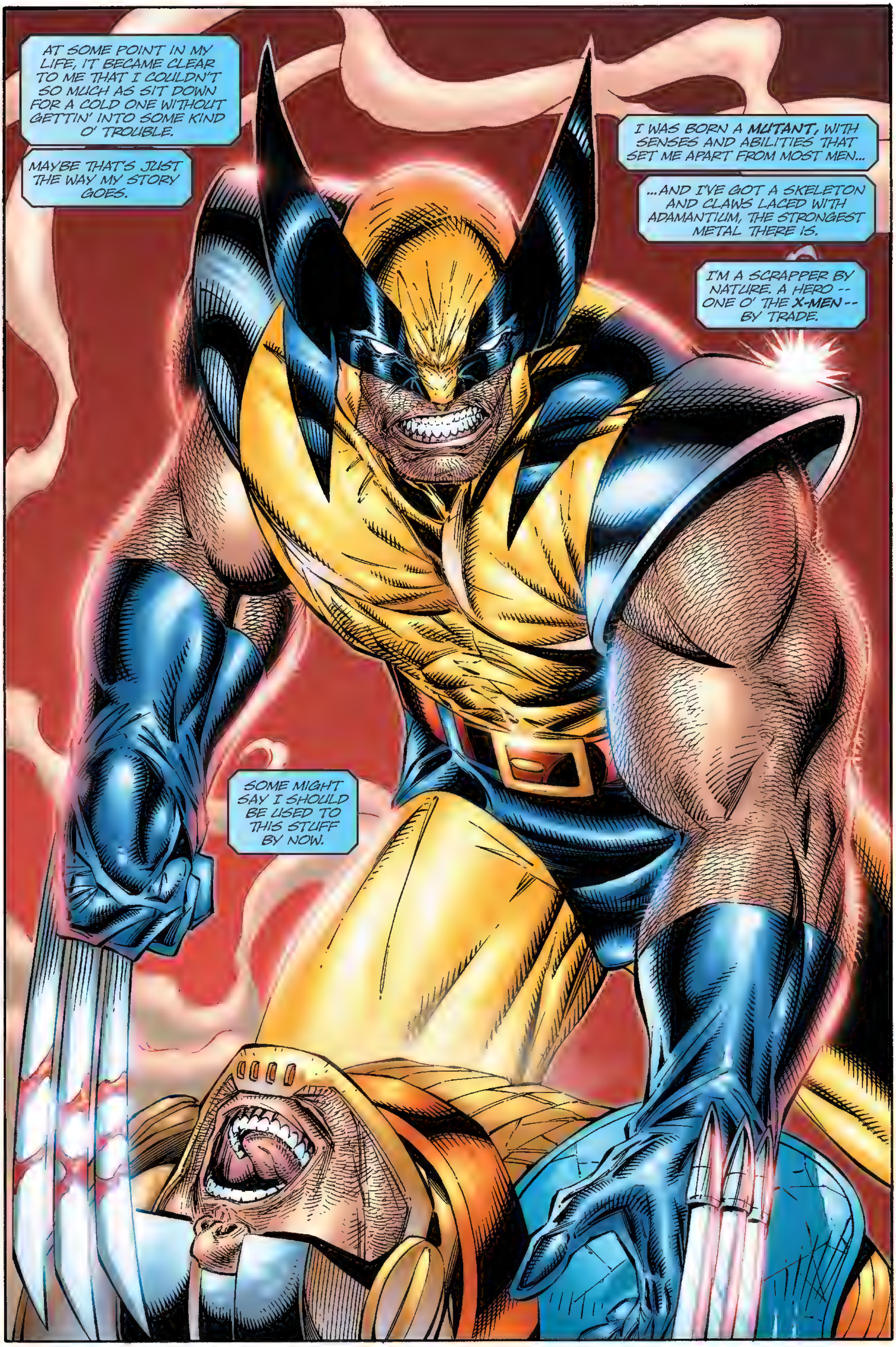
AT SOME POINT IN MY LIFE, IT BECAME CLEAR TO ME THAT I COULDN'T SO MUCH AS SIT DOWN FOR A COLD ONE WITHOUT GETTIN' INTO SOME KIND O' TROUBLE.
MAYBE THAT'S JUST THE WAY MY STORY GOES.
I WAS BORN A **MUTANT**, WITH SENSES AND ABILITIES THAT SET ME APART FROM MOST MEN...
...AND I'VE GOT A SKELETON AND CLAWS LACED WITH ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL THERE IS.
I'M A SCRAPPER BY NATURE. A HERO -- ONE O' THE **X-MEN** -- BY TRADE.
SOME MIGHT SAY I SHOULD BE USED TO THIS STUFF BY NOW.

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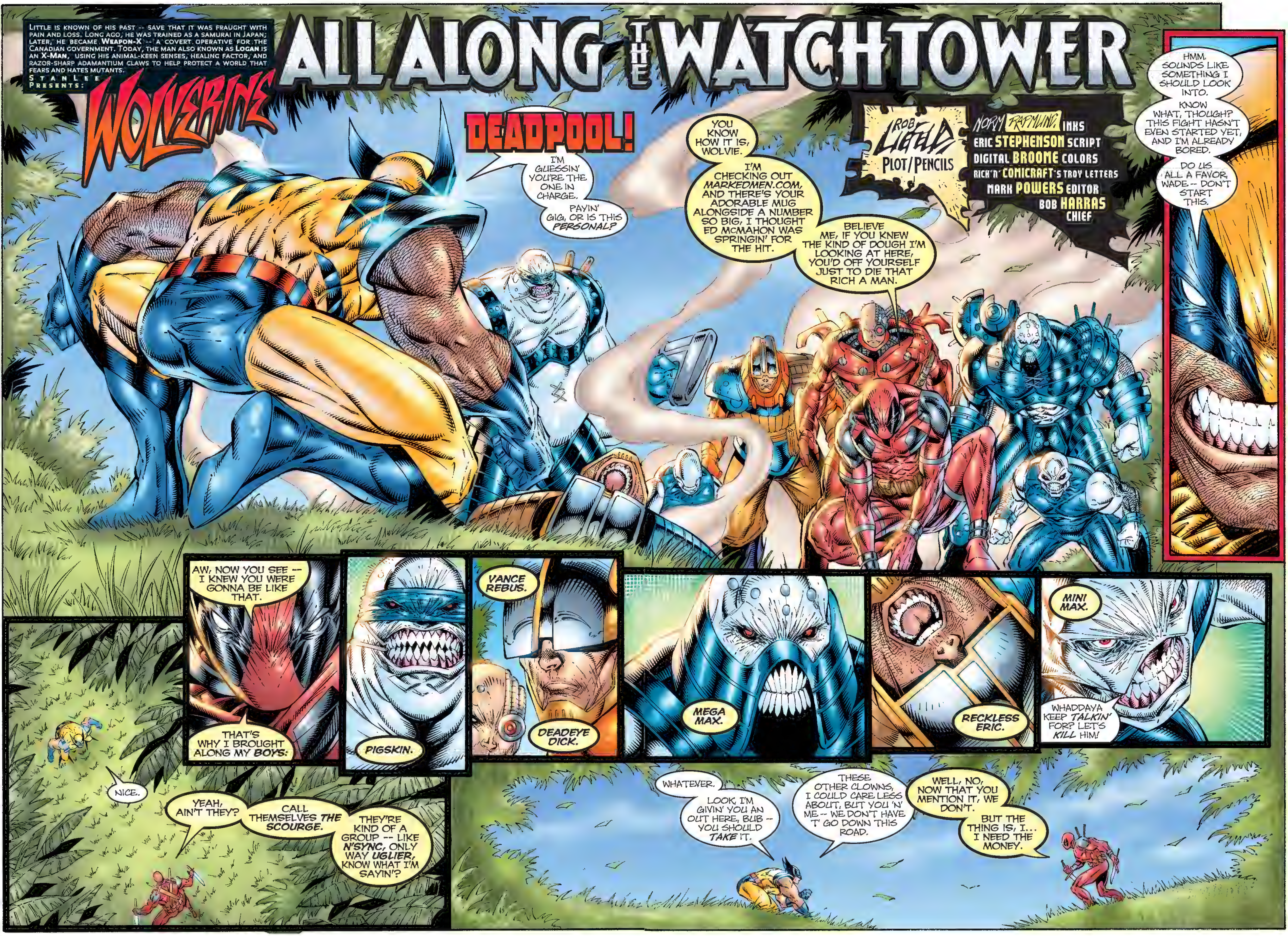
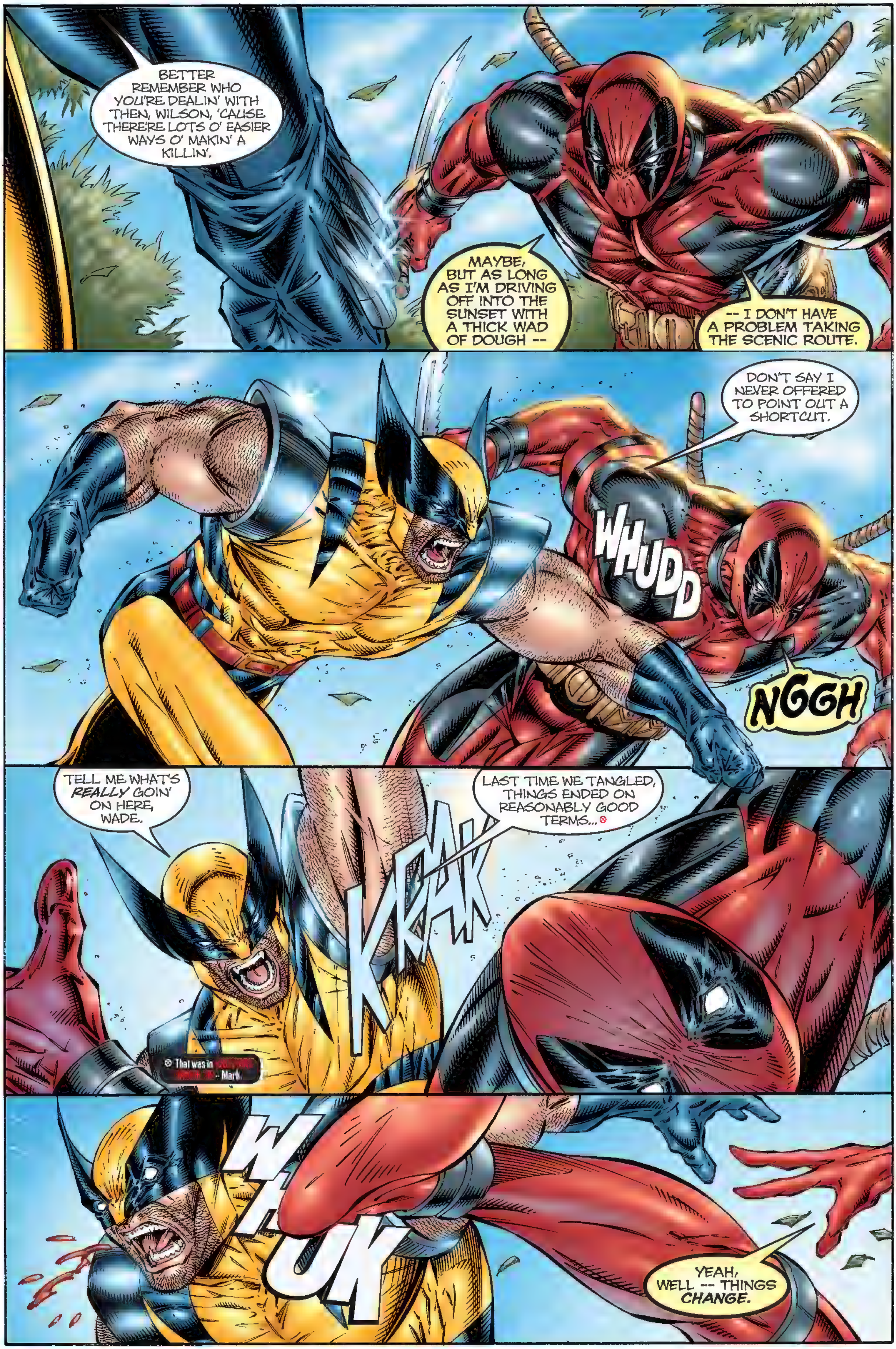
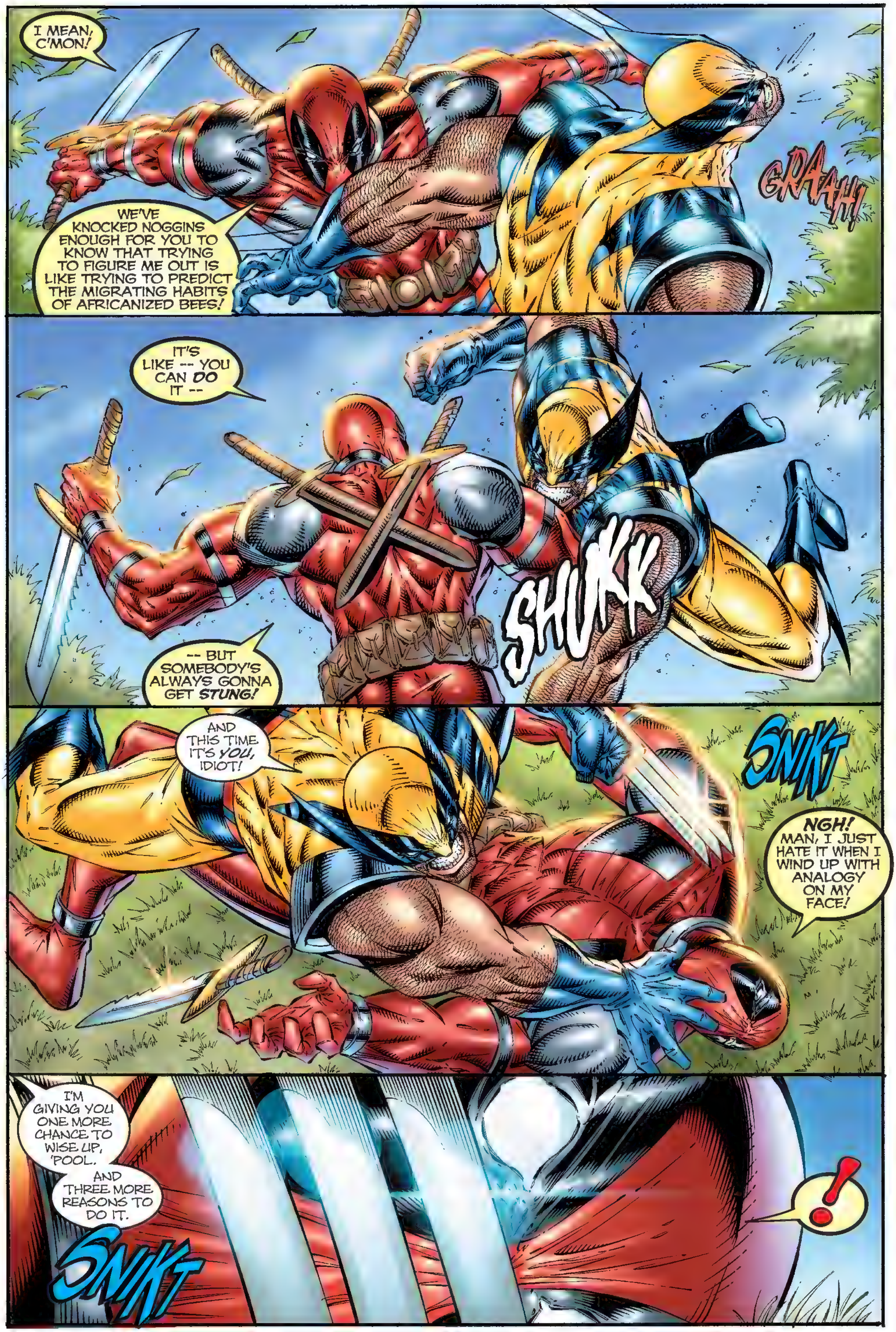
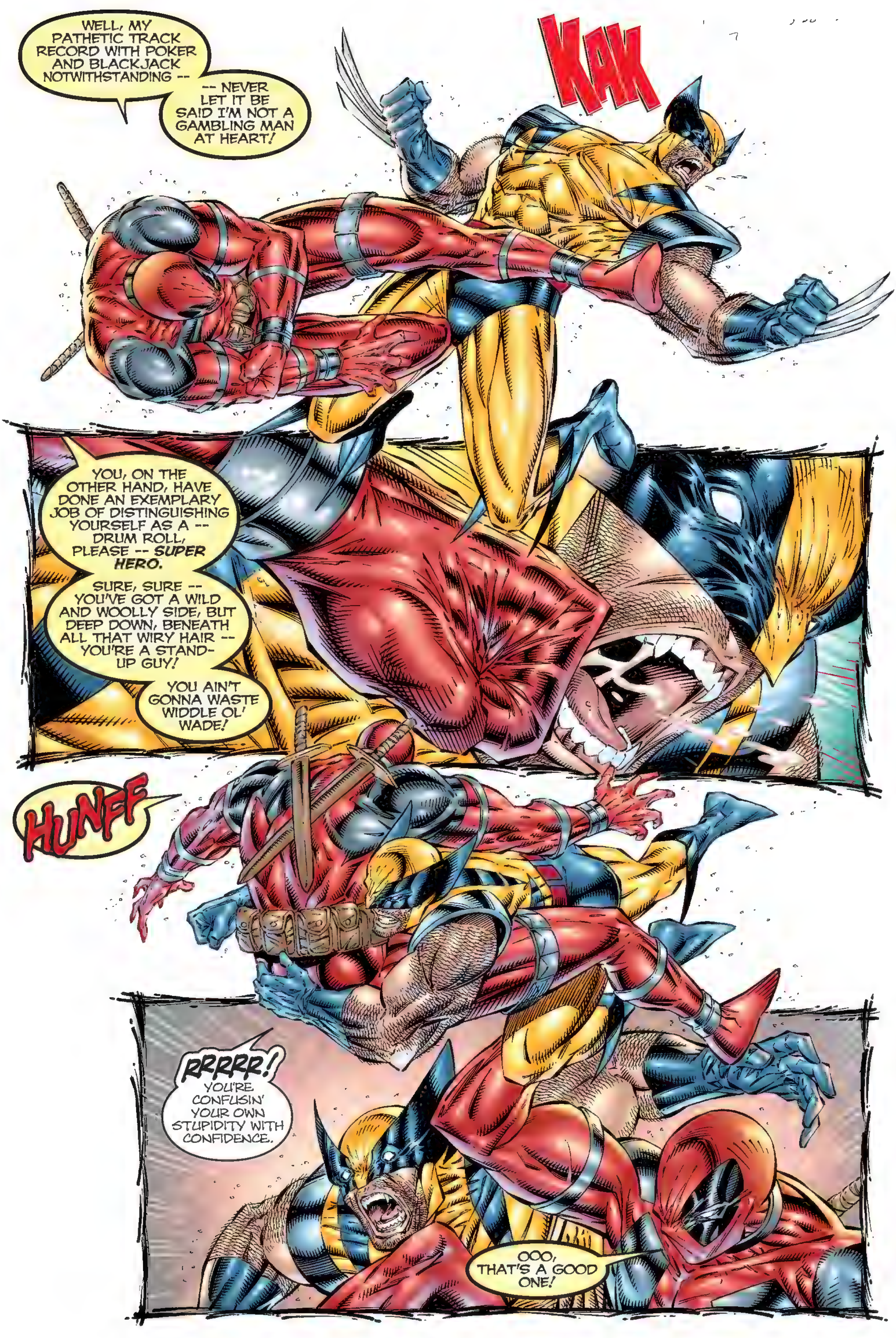
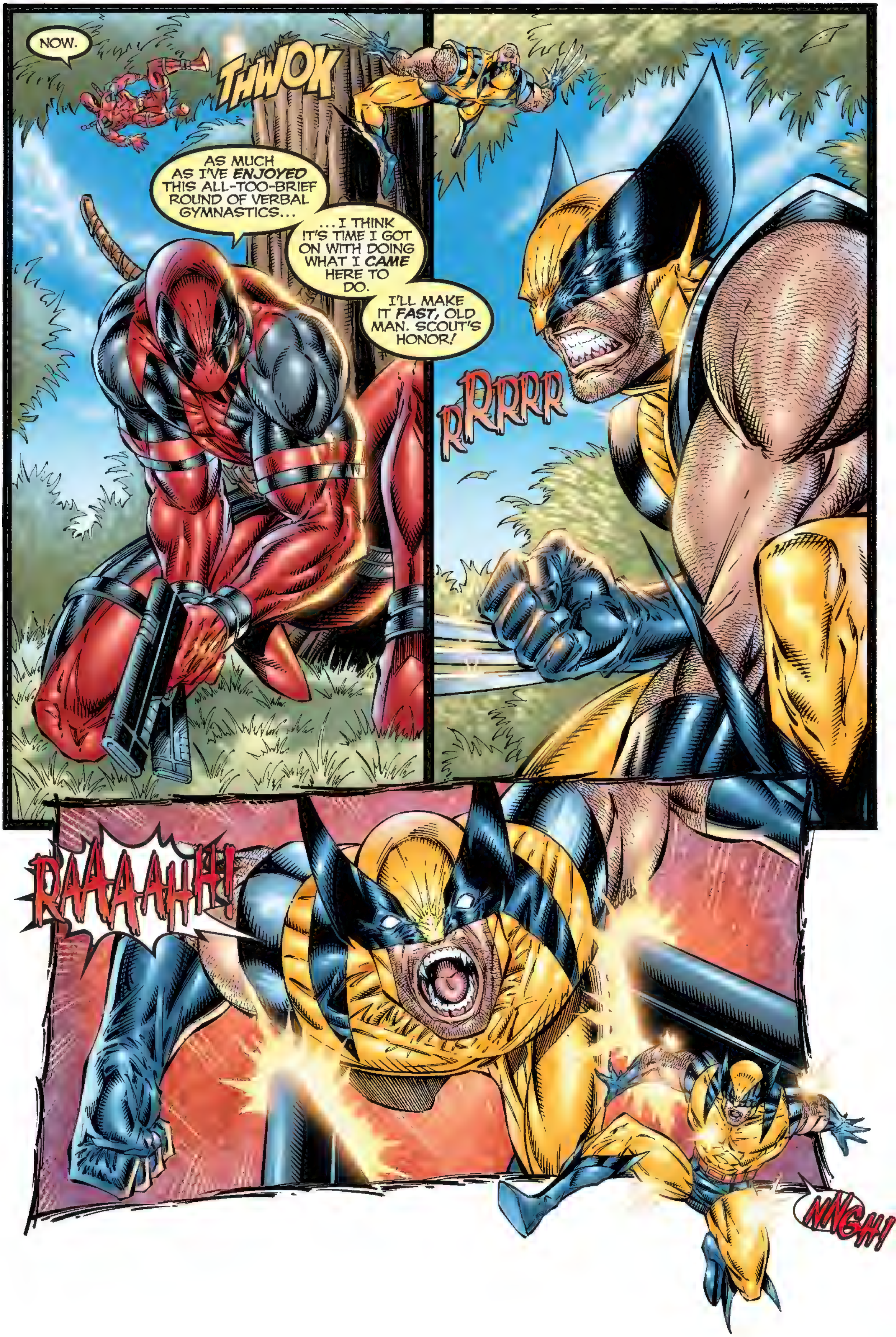
ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER

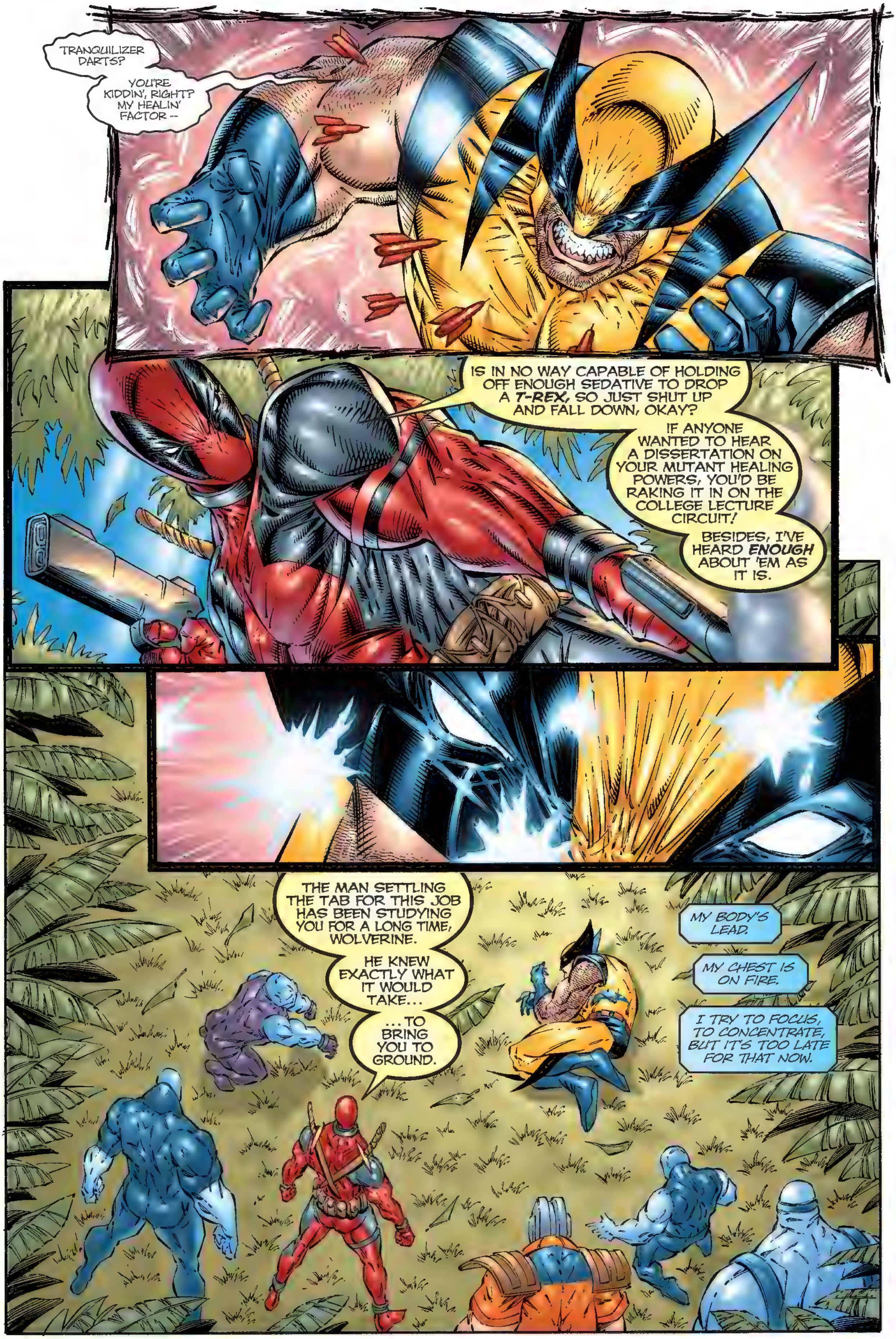

LITTLE IS KNOWN OF HIS PAST -- SAVE THAT IT WAS FRAUGHT WITH PAIN AND LOSS. LONG AGO, HE WAS TRAINED AS A SAMURAI IN JAPAN; LATER, HE BECAME WEAPON-X -- A COVERT OPERATIVE FOR THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. TODAY, THE MAN ALSO KNOWN AS LOGAN IS AN X-MAN, USING HIS ANIMAL-KEEN SENSES, HEALING FACTOR, AND RAZOR-SHARP ADAMANTIUM CLAWS TO HELP PROTECT A WORLD THAT FEARS AND HATES MUTANTS.
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
WOLVERINE
ROB LIEFELD PLOT/PENCILS
NORM RAPMUND INKS
ERIC STEPHENSON SCRIPT
DIGITAL BROOME COLORS
RICK 'N' COMICRAFT'S TROY LETTERS
MARK POWERS EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF
DEADPOOL!
I'M GUESSIN' YOU'RE THE ONE IN CHARGE. PAYIN' GIG, OR IS THIS PERSONAL?
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS, WOLVIE.
I'M CHECKING OUT MARKEDMEN.COM, AND THERE'S YOUR ADORABLE MUG ALONGSIDE A NUMBER SO BIG, I THOUGHT ED McMAHON WAS SPRINGIN' FOR THE HIT.
BELIEVE ME, IF YOU KNEW THE KIND OF DOUGH I'M LOOKING AT HERE, YOU'D OFF YOURSELF JUST TO DIE THAT RICH A MAN.
HMM. SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING I SHOULD LOOK INTO.
KNOW WHAT, THOUGH? THIS FIGHT HASN'T EVEN STARTED YET, AND I'M ALREADY BORED.
DO US ALL A FAVOR, WADE -- DON'T START THIS.
AW, NOW YOU SEE -- I KNEW YOU WERE GONNA BE LIKE THAT.
THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT ALONG MY BOYS:
PIGSKIN.
VANCE REBUS.
DEADEYE DICK.
MEGA MAX.
RECKLESS ERIC.
MINI MAX.
WHADDAYA KEEP TALKIN' FOR? LET'S KILL HIM!
NICE.
YEAH, AIN'T THEY?
CALL THEMSELVES THE SCOURGE.
THEY'RE KIND OF A GROUP -- LIKE N'SYNC, ONLY WAY UGLIER, KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN'?
WHATEVER.
LOOK, I'M GIVIN' YOU AN OUT HERE, BUB -- YOU SHOULD TAKE IT.
THESE OTHER CLOWNS, I COULD CARE LESS ABOUT, BUT YOU 'N' ME -- WE DON'T HAVE T' GO DOWN THIS ROAD.
WELL, NO, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, WE DON'T.
BUT THE THING IS, I... I NEED THE MONEY.

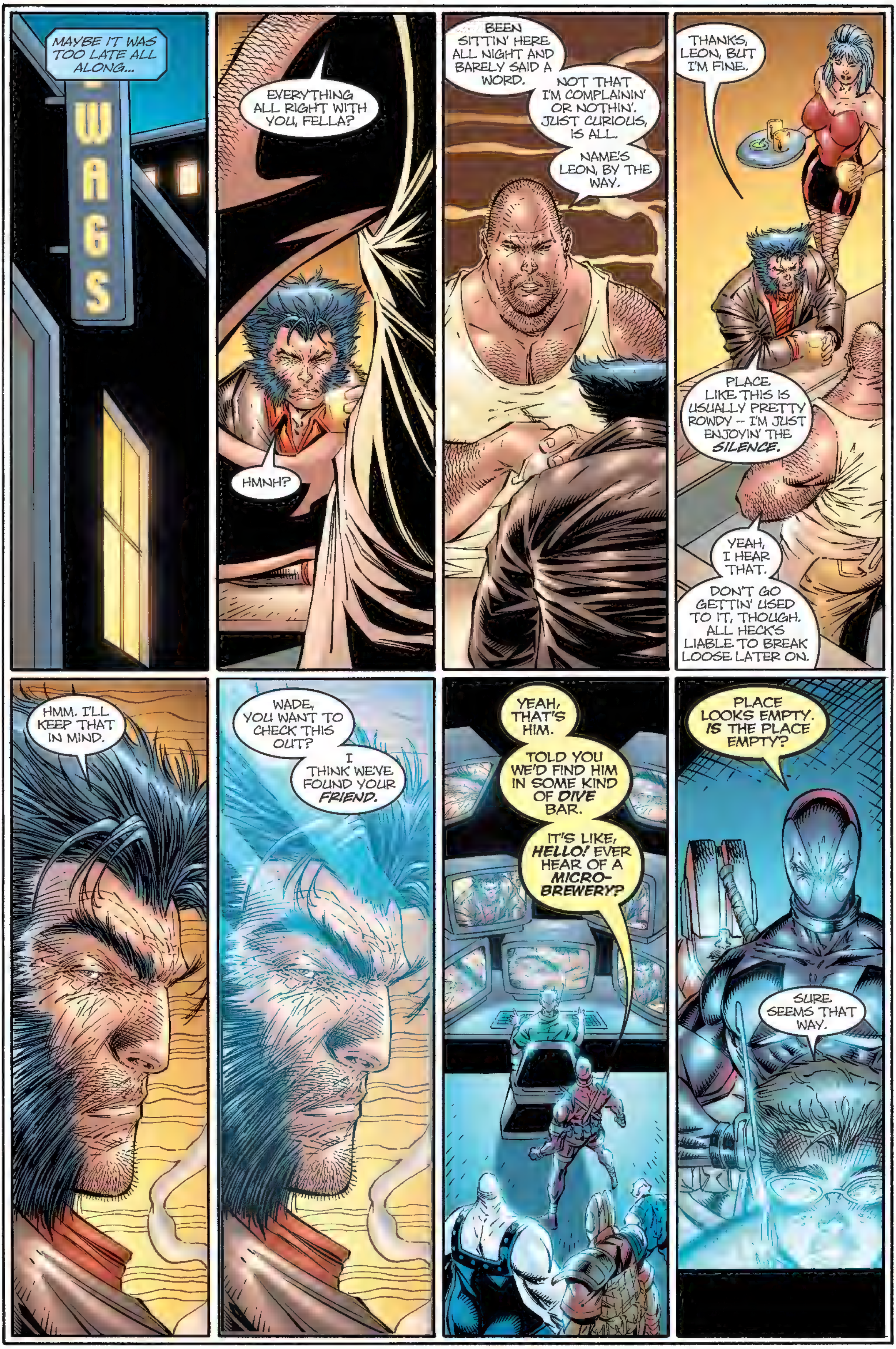

BETTER REMEMBER WHO YOU'RE DEALIN' WITH THEN, WILSON, 'CAUSE THERE'RE LOTS O' EASIER WAYS O' MAKIN' A KILLIN'.
MAYBE, BUT AS LONG AS I'M DRIVING OFF INTO THE SUNSET WITH A THICK WAD OF DOUGH --
-- I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE.
DON'T SAY I NEVER OFFERED TO POINT OUT A SHORTCUT.
WHUDD
NGGH
TELL ME WHAT'S *REALLY* GOIN' ON HERE, WADE.
LAST TIME WE TANGLED, THINGS ENDED ON REASONABLY GOOD TERMS...
KRAK
That was in [illegible] - Mark.
WHUK
YEAH, WELL -- THINGS *CHANGE.*

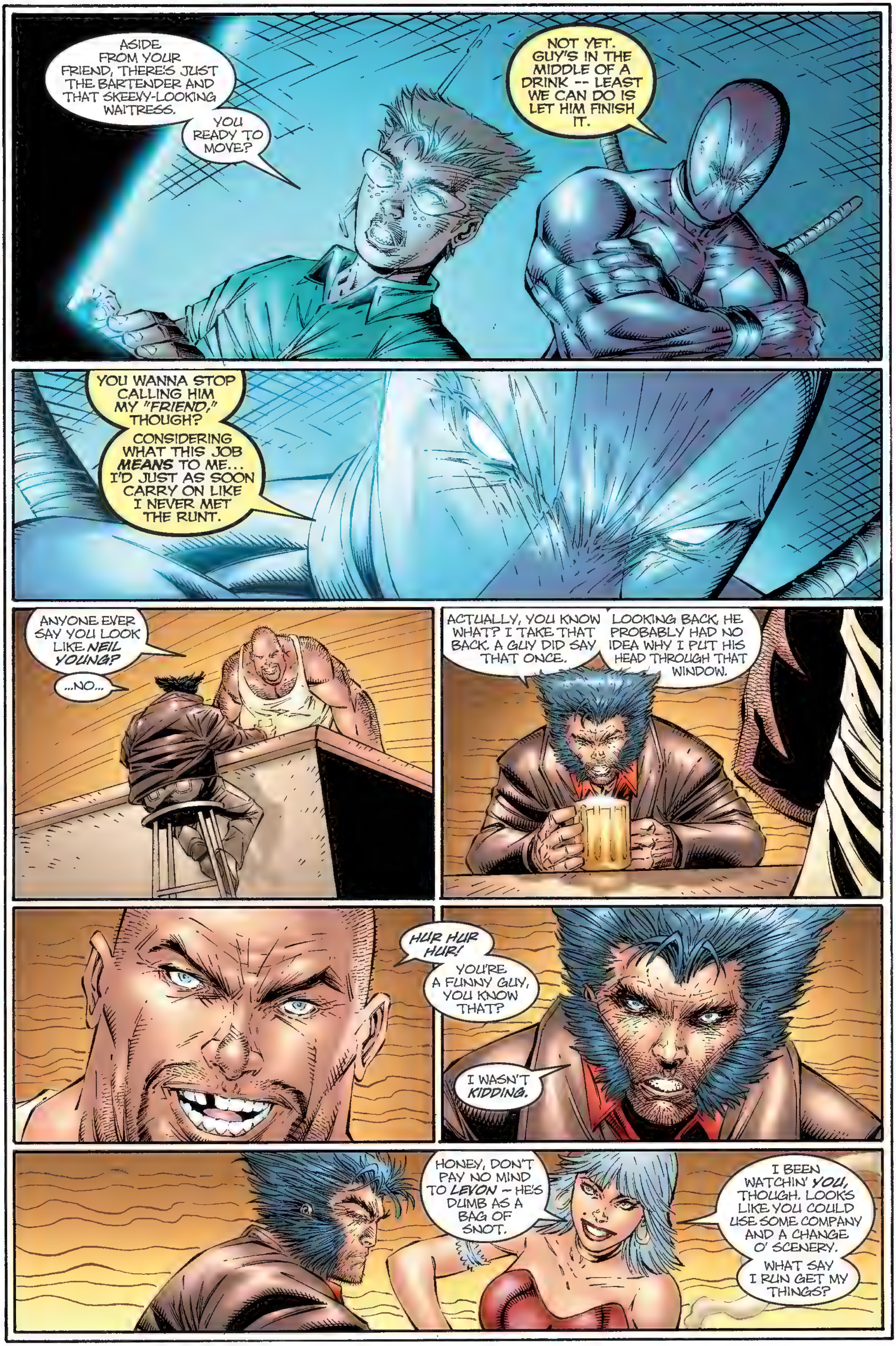

I MEAN, C'MON!
WE'VE KNOCKED NOGGINS ENOUGH FOR YOU TO KNOW THAT TRYING TO FIGURE ME OUT IS LIKE TRYING TO PREDICT THE MIGRATING HABITS OF AFRICANIZED BEES!
GRAAHH!
IT'S LIKE -- YOU CAN *DO* IT --
-- BUT SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS GONNA GET *STUNG!*
SHUKK
AND THIS TIME IT'S *YOU,* IDIOT!
SNIKT
NGH! MAN, I JUST HATE IT WHEN I WIND UP WITH ANALOGY ON MY FACE!
I'M GIVING YOU ONE MORE CHANCE TO WISE UP, 'POOL.
AND THREE MORE REASONS TO DO IT.
SNIKT
!

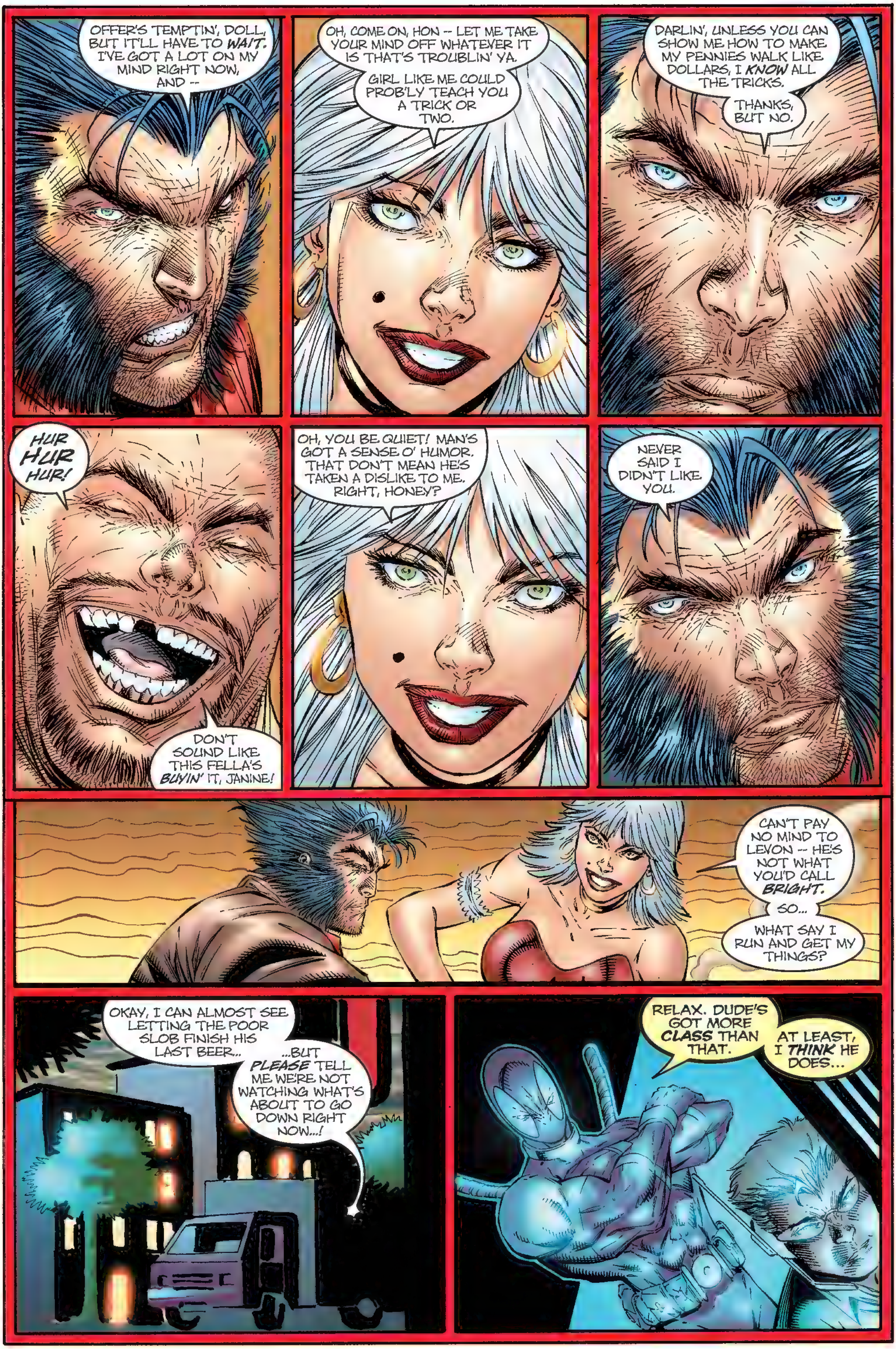

WELL, MY PATHETIC TRACK RECORD WITH POKER AND BLACKJACK NOTWITHSTANDING --
-- NEVER LET IT BE SAID I'M NOT A GAMBLING MAN AT HEART!
KAK
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE DONE AN EXEMPLARY JOB OF DISTINGUISHING YOURSELF AS A -- DRUM ROLL, PLEASE -- *SUPER HERO.*
SURE, SURE -- YOU'VE GOT A WILD AND WOOLLY SIDE, BUT DEEP DOWN, BENEATH ALL THAT WIRY HAIR -- YOU'RE A STAND-UP GUY!
YOU AIN'T GONNA WASTE WIDDLE OL' WADE!
HUNFF
RRRRR! YOU'RE CONFUSIN' YOUR OWN STUPIDITY WITH CONFIDENCE.
OOO, THAT'S A GOOD ONE!

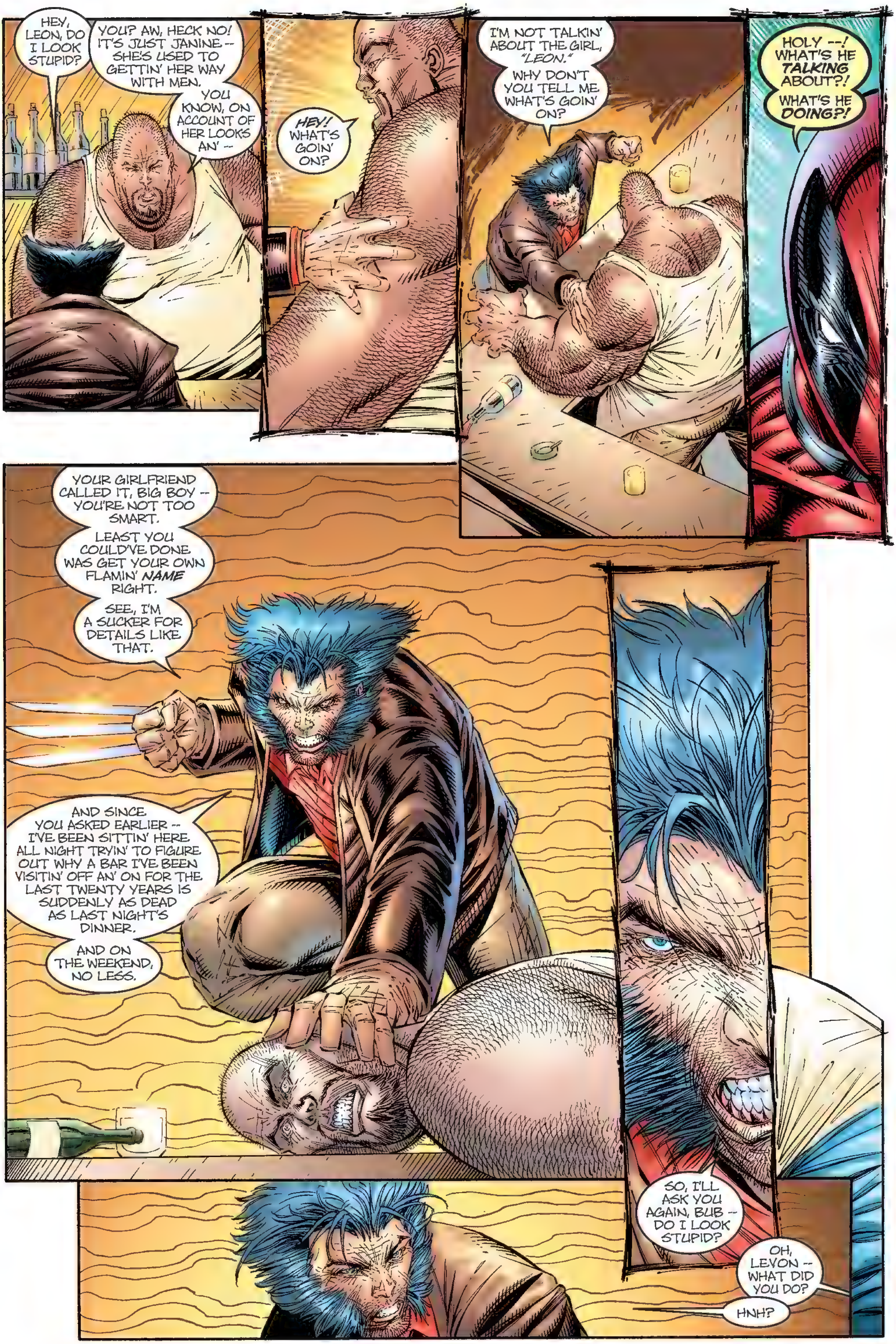

NOW.
THWOK
AS MUCH AS I'VE ENJOYED THIS ALL-TOO-BRIEF ROUND OF VERBAL GYMNASTICS...
...I THINK IT'S TIME I GOT ON WITH DOING WHAT I CAME HERE TO DO.
I'LL MAKE IT FAST, OLD MAN. SCOUT'S HONOR!
rRRRRR
RAAAAHH!
NNGH!

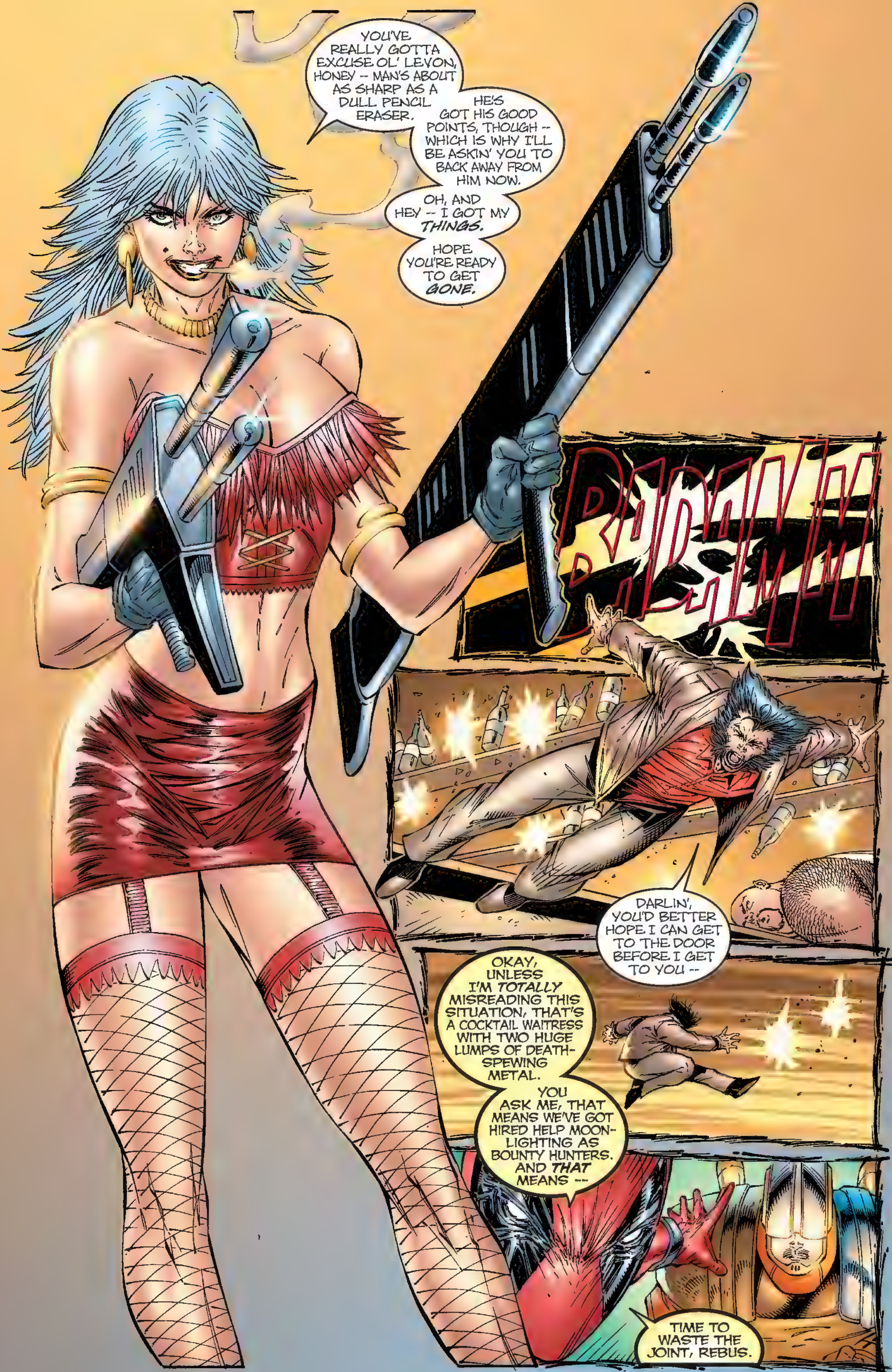

TRANQUILIZER DARTS?
YOU'RE KIDDIN', RIGHT? MY HEALIN' FACTOR --
IS IN NO WAY CAPABLE OF HOLDING OFF ENOUGH SEDATIVE TO DROP A *T-REX,* SO JUST SHUT UP AND FALL DOWN, OKAY?
IF ANYONE WANTED TO HEAR A DISSERTATION ON YOUR MUTANT HEALING POWERS, YOU'D BE RAKING IT IN ON THE COLLEGE LECTURE CIRCUIT!
BESIDES, I'VE HEARD **ENOUGH** ABOUT 'EM AS IT IS.
THE MAN SETTLING THE TAB FOR THIS JOB HAS BEEN STUDYING YOU FOR A LONG TIME, WOLVERINE.
HE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT IT WOULD TAKE...
...TO BRING YOU TO GROUND.
MY BODY'S LEAD.
MY CHEST IS ON FIRE.
I TRY TO FOCUS, TO CONCENTRATE, BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW.

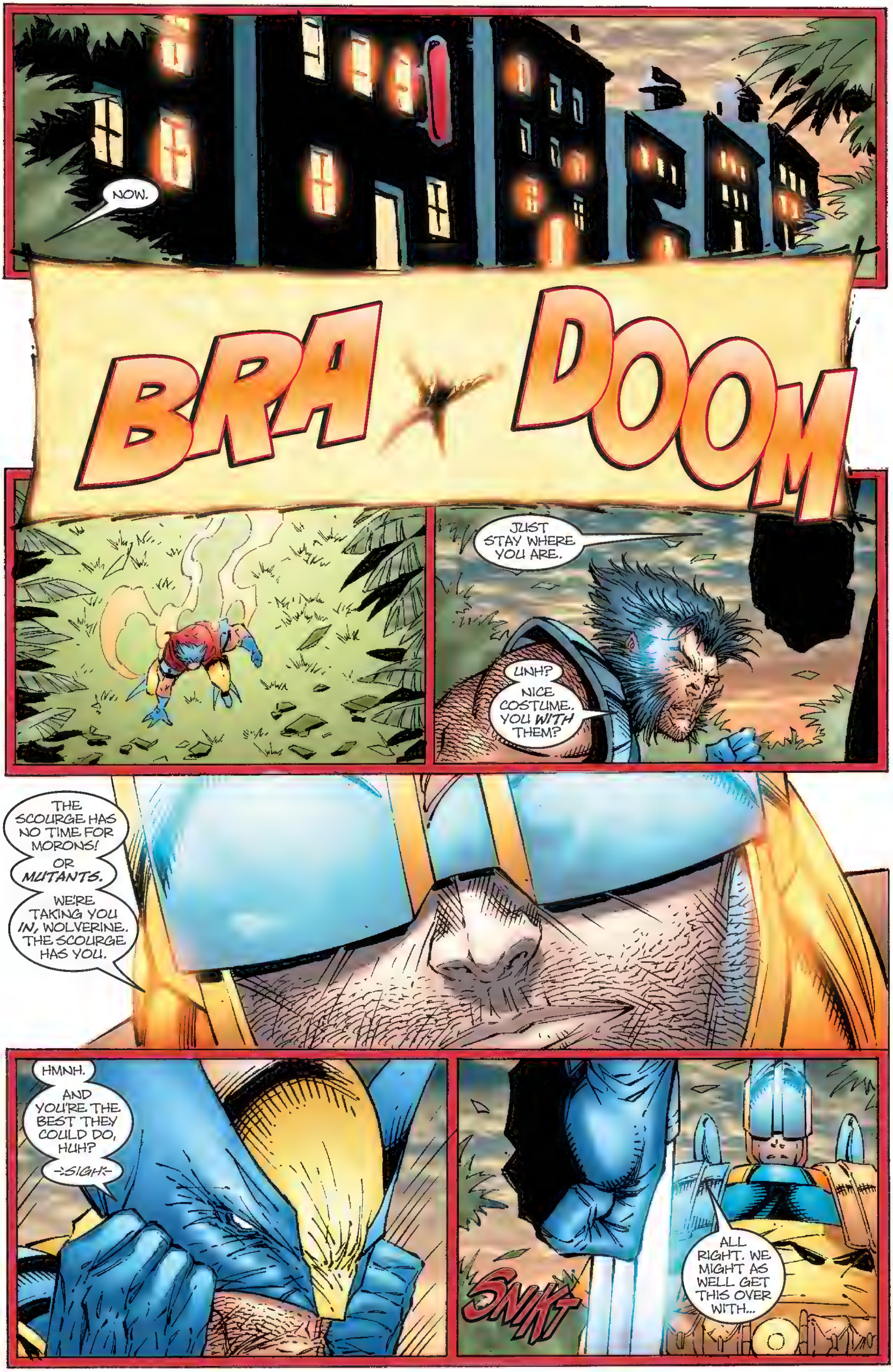

MAYBE IT WAS TOO LATE ALL ALONG...
WAGS
EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, FELLA?
HMNH?
BEEN SITTIN' HERE ALL NIGHT AND BARELY SAID A WORD.
NOT THAT I'M COMPLAININ' OR NOTHIN'. JUST CURIOUS, IS ALL.
NAME'S LEON, BY THE WAY.
THANKS, LEON, BUT I'M FINE.
PLACE LIKE THIS IS USUALLY PRETTY ROWDY -- I'M JUST ENJOYIN' THE *SILENCE.*
YEAH, I HEAR THAT.
DON'T GO GETTIN' USED TO IT, THOUGH. ALL HECK'S LIABLE TO BREAK LOOSE LATER ON.
HMM. I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.
WADE, YOU WANT TO CHECK THIS OUT?
I THINK WE'VE FOUND YOUR *FRIEND.*
YEAH, THAT'S HIM.
TOLD YOU WE'D FIND HIM IN SOME KIND OF *DIVE* BAR.
IT'S LIKE, *HELLO!* EVER HEAR OF A *MICRO-BREWERY?*
PLACE LOOKS EMPTY. *IS* THE PLACE EMPTY?
SURE SEEMS THAT WAY.

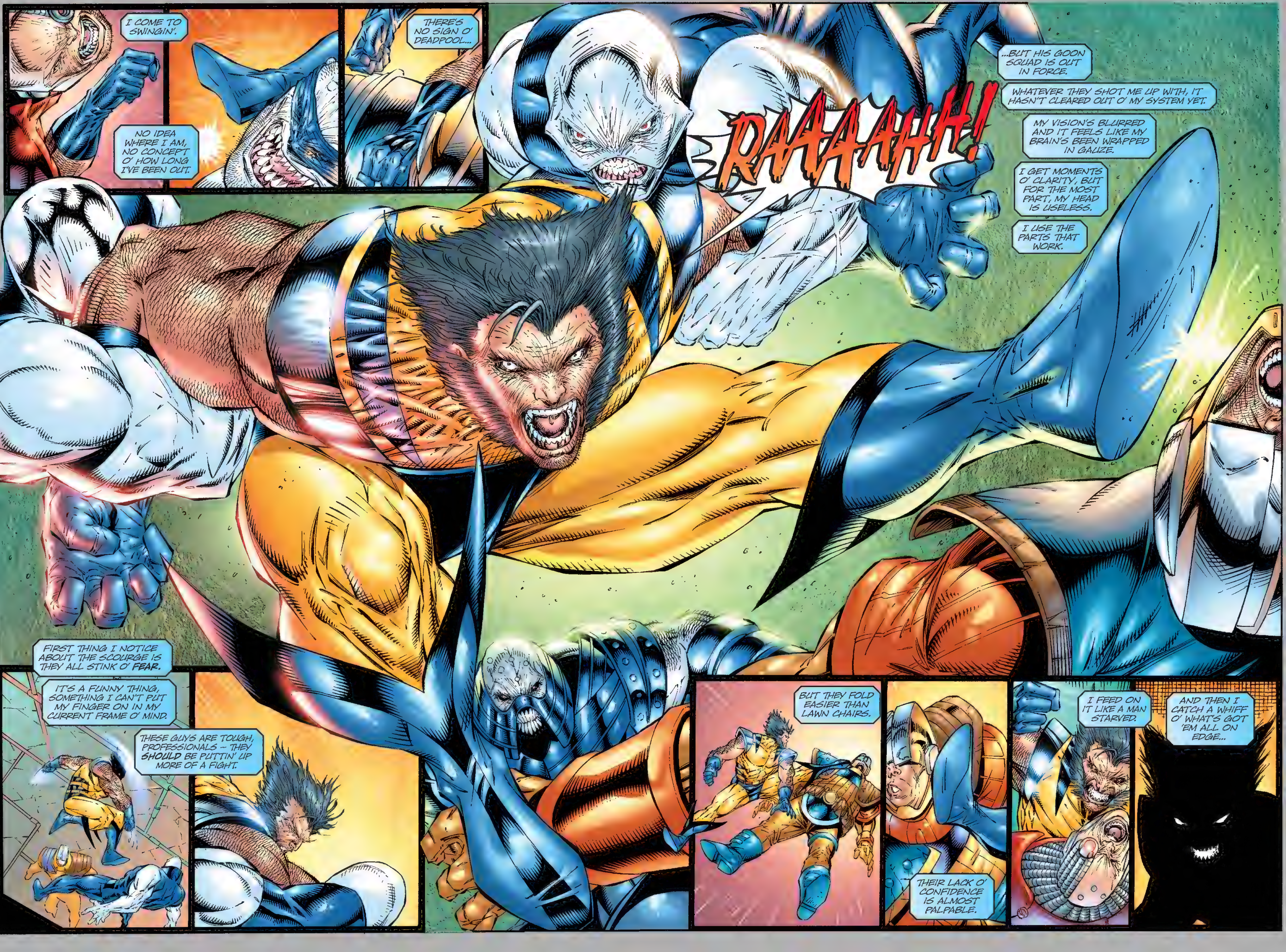

ASIDE FROM YOUR FRIEND, THERE'S JUST THE BARTENDER AND THAT SKEEVY-LOOKING WAITRESS.
YOU READY TO MOVE?
NOT YET. GUY'S IN THE MIDDLE OF A DRINK -- LEAST WE CAN DO IS LET HIM FINISH IT.
YOU WANNA STOP CALLING HIM MY "FRIEND," THOUGH?
CONSIDERING WHAT THIS JOB **MEANS** TO ME... I'D JUST AS SOON CARRY ON LIKE I NEVER MET THE RUNT.
ANYONE EVER SAY YOU LOOK LIKE ***NEIL YOUNG?***
...NO...
ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW WHAT? I TAKE THAT BACK. A GUY DID SAY THAT ONCE.
LOOKING BACK, HE PROBABLY HAD NO IDEA WHY I PUT HIS HEAD THROUGH THAT WINDOW.
HUR HUR HUR!
YOU'RE A FUNNY GUY, YOU KNOW THAT?
I WASN'T ***KIDDING.***
HONEY, DON'T PAY NO MIND TO ***LEVON*** -- HE'S DUMB AS A BAG OF SNOT.
I BEEN WATCHIN' ***YOU,*** THOUGH. LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD USE SOME COMPANY AND A CHANGE O' SCENERY.
WHAT SAY I RUN GET MY THINGS?

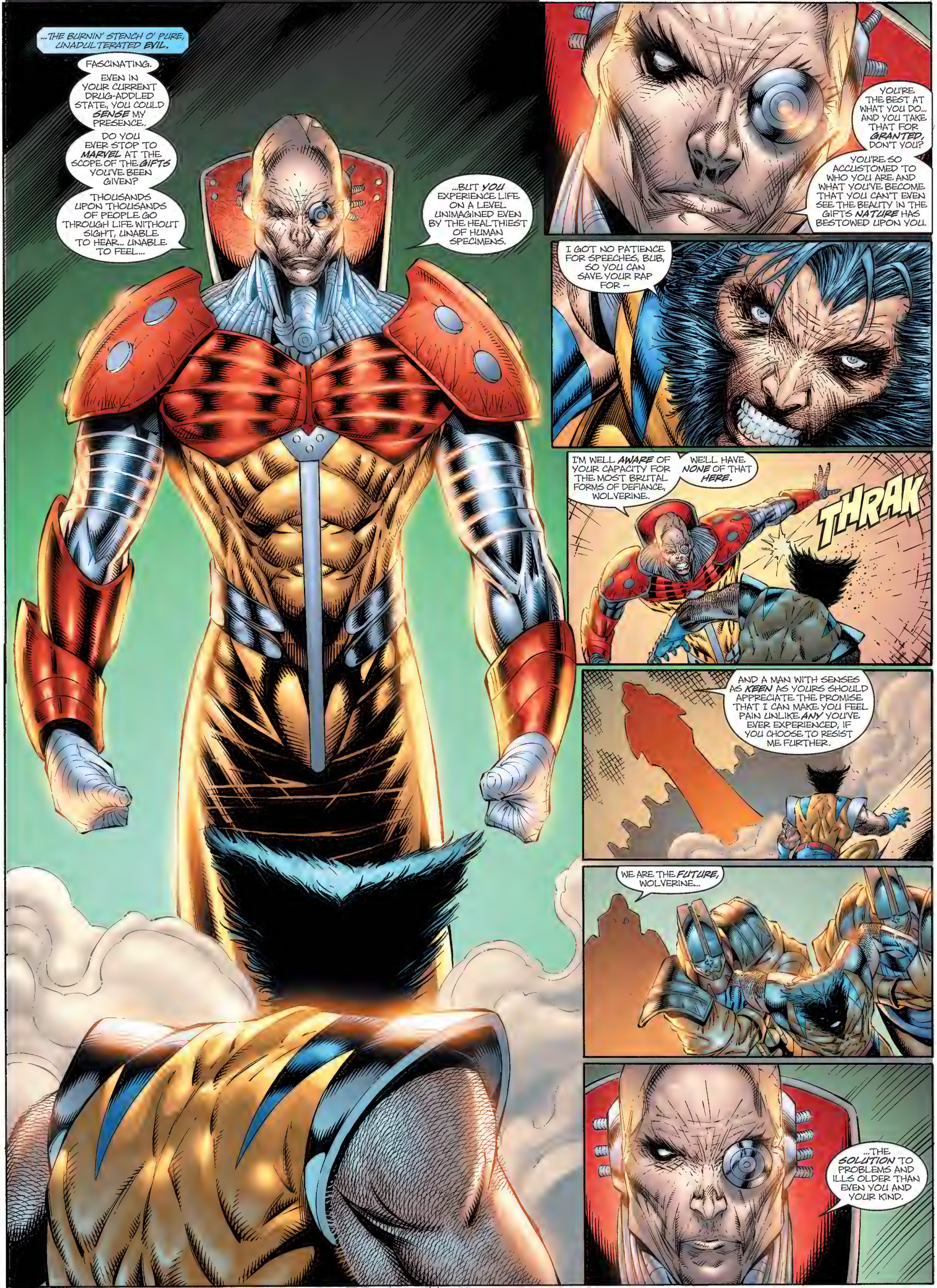

OFFER'S TEMPTIN', DOLL, BUT IT'LL HAVE TO *WAIT.* I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY MIND RIGHT NOW, AND --
OH, COME ON, HON -- LET ME TAKE YOUR MIND OFF WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S TROUBLIN' YA.
GIRL LIKE ME COULD PROB'LY TEACH YOU A TRICK OR TWO.
DARLIN', UNLESS YOU CAN SHOW ME HOW TO MAKE MY PENNIES WALK LIKE DOLLARS, I *KNOW* ALL THE TRICKS.
THANKS, BUT NO.
HUR *HUR* HUR!
DON'T SOUND LIKE THIS FELLA'S *BUYIN'* IT, JANINE!
OH, YOU BE QUIET! MAN'S GOT A SENSE O' HUMOR. THAT DON'T MEAN HE'S TAKEN A DISLIKE TO ME. RIGHT, HONEY?
NEVER SAID I DIDN'T LIKE YOU.
CAN'T PAY NO MIND TO LEVON -- HE'S NOT WHAT YOU'D CALL *BRIGHT.*
SO...
WHAT SAY I RUN AND GET MY THINGS?
OKAY, I CAN ALMOST SEE LETTING THE POOR SLOB FINISH HIS LAST BEER...
...BUT *PLEASE* TELL ME WE'RE NOT WATCHING WHAT'S ABOUT TO GO DOWN RIGHT NOW...!
RELAX. DUDE'S GOT MORE *CLASS* THAN THAT.
AT LEAST, I *THINK* HE DOES...

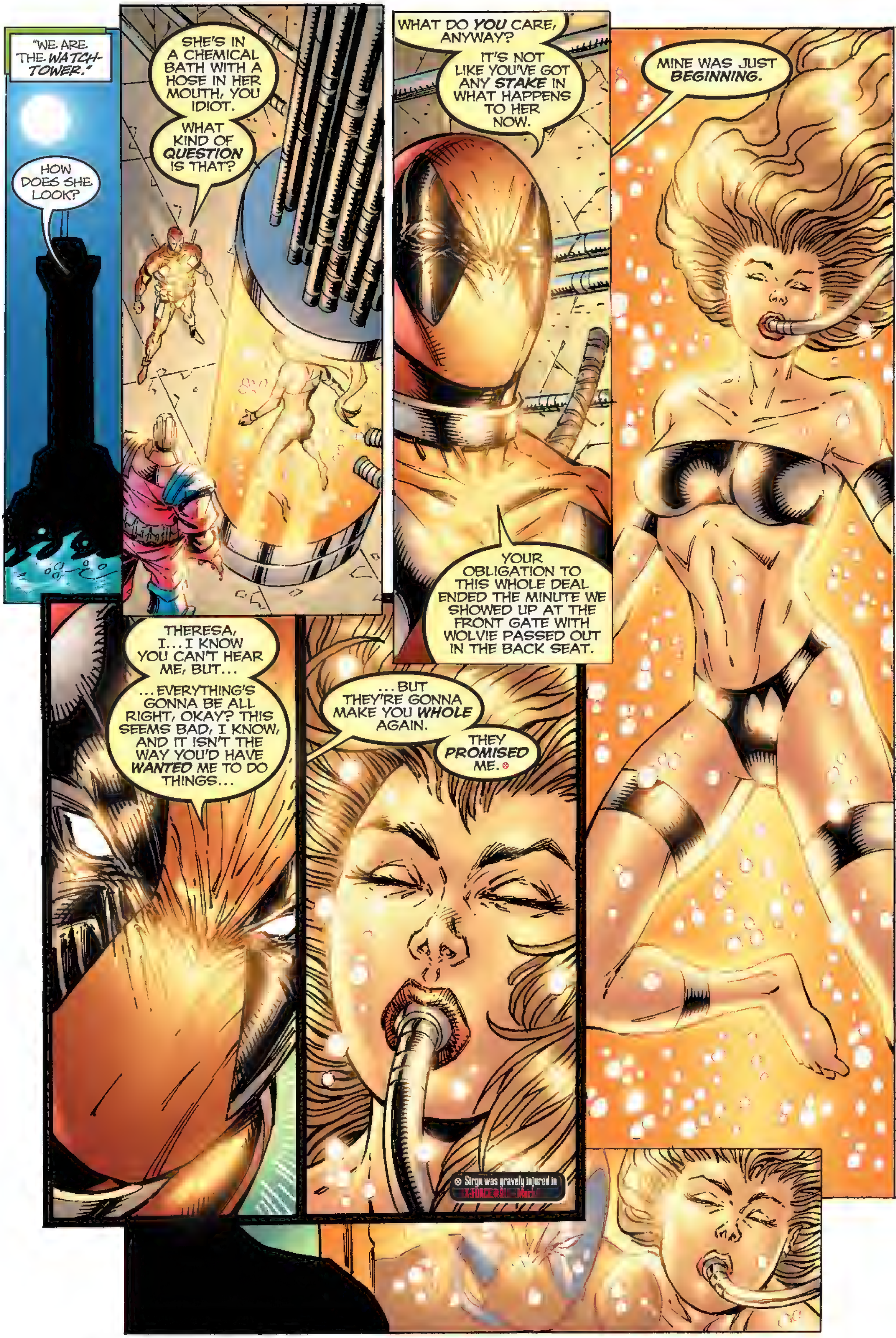

HEY, LEON, DO I LOOK STUPID?
YOU? AW, HECK NO! IT'S JUST JANINE -- SHE'S USED TO GETTIN' HER WAY WITH MEN.
YOU KNOW, ON ACCOUNT OF HER LOOKS AN' --
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
I'M NOT TALKIN' ABOUT THE GIRL, *"LEON."*
WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
HOLY --! WHAT'S HE *TALKING* ABOUT?!
WHAT'S HE *DOING?!*
YOUR GIRLFRIEND CALLED IT, BIG BOY -- YOU'RE NOT TOO SMART.
LEAST YOU COULD'VE DONE WAS GET YOUR OWN FLAMIN' *NAME* RIGHT.
SEE, I'M A SUCKER FOR DETAILS LIKE THAT.
AND SINCE YOU ASKED EARLIER -- I'VE BEEN SITTIN' HERE ALL NIGHT TRYIN' TO FIGURE OUT WHY A BAR I'VE BEEN VISITIN' OFF AN' ON FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS IS SUDDENLY AS DEAD AS LAST NIGHT'S DINNER.
AND ON THE WEEKEND, NO LESS.
SO, I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN, BUB -- DO I LOOK STUPID?
OH, LEVON -- WHAT DID YOU DO?
HNH?

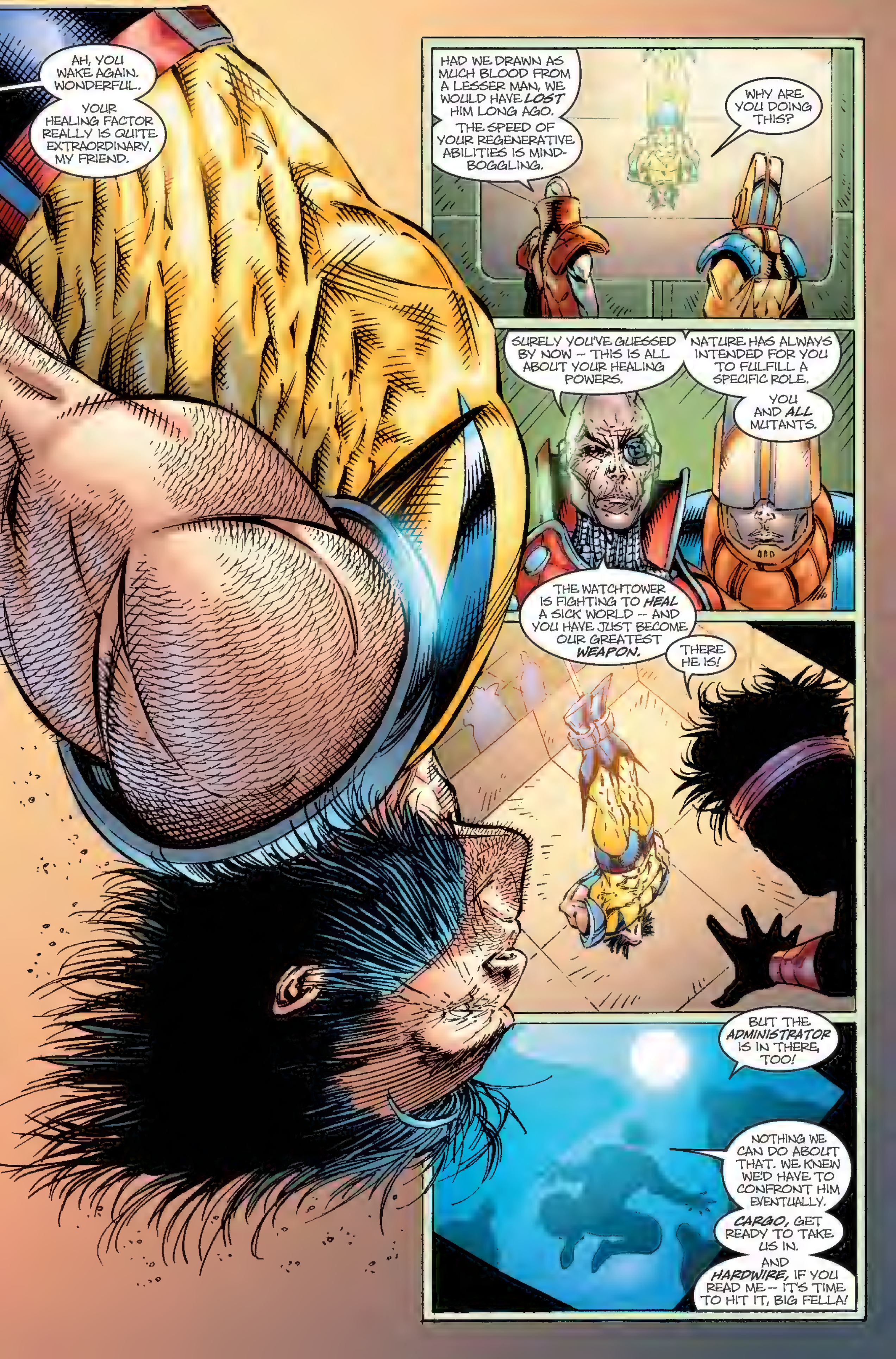

YOU'VE REALLY GOTTA EXCUSE OL' LEVON, HONEY -- MAN'S ABOUT AS SHARP AS A DULL PENCIL ERASER.
HE'S GOT HIS GOOD POINTS, THOUGH -- WHICH IS WHY I'LL BE ASKIN' YOU TO BACK AWAY FROM HIM NOW.
OH, AND HEY -- I GOT MY *THINGS.*
HOPE YOU'RE READY TO GET *GONE.*
BADAMM
DARLIN', YOU'D BETTER HOPE I CAN GET TO THE DOOR BEFORE I GET TO YOU --
OKAY, UNLESS I'M *TOTALLY* MISREADING THIS SITUATION, THAT'S A COCKTAIL WAITRESS WITH TWO HUGE LUMPS OF DEATH-SPEWING METAL.
YOU ASK ME, THAT MEANS WE'VE GOT HIRED HELP MOONLIGHTING AS BOUNTY HUNTERS. AND *THAT* MEANS --
TIME TO WASTE THE JOINT, REBUS.

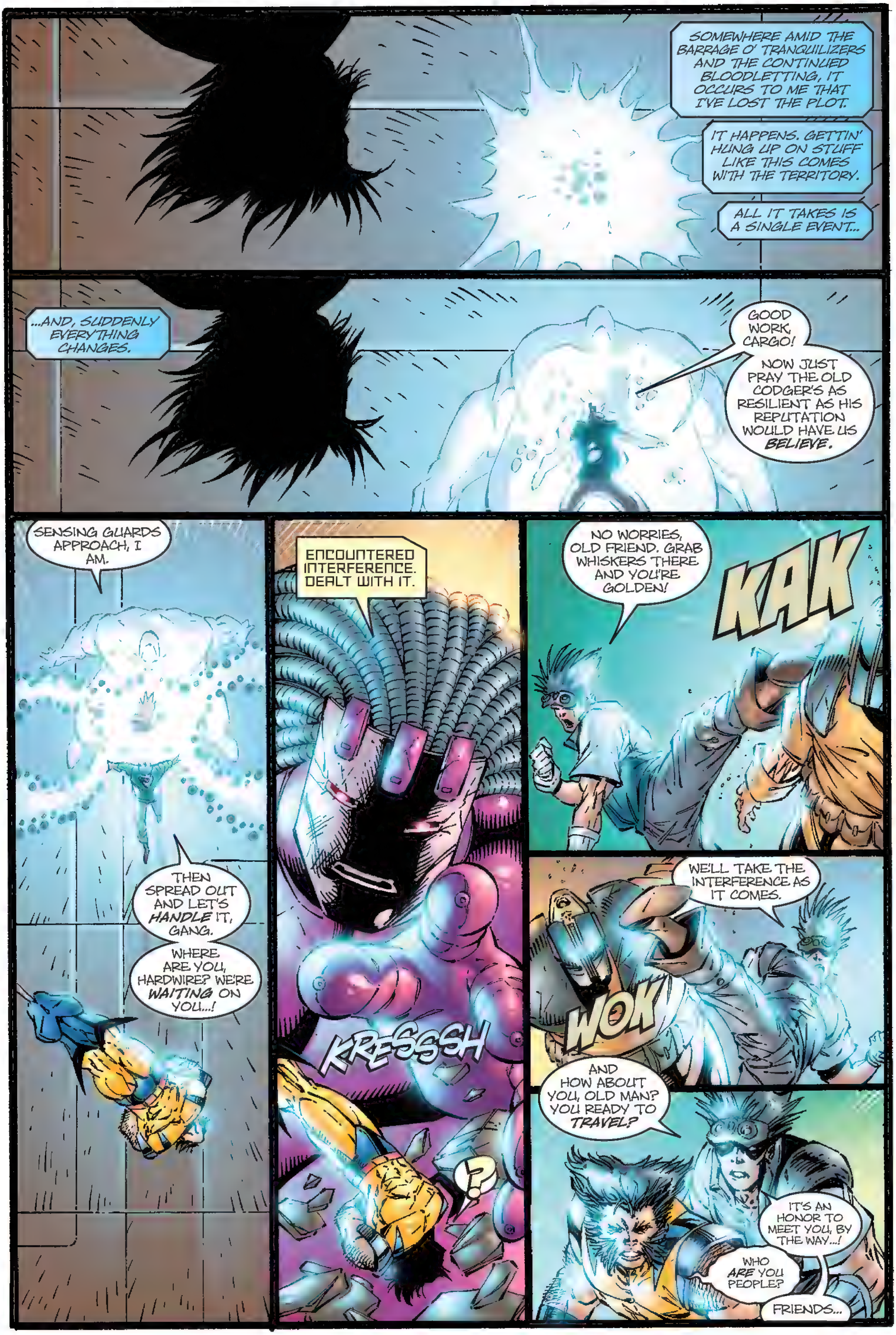

NOW.
BRA-DOOM
JUST STAY WHERE YOU ARE.
UNH? NICE COSTUME. YOU *WITH* THEM?
THE SCOURGE HAS NO TIME FOR MORONS!
OR *MUTANTS.*
WE'RE TAKING YOU *IN,* WOLVERINE. THE SCOURGE HAS YOU.
HMNH.
AND YOU'RE THE BEST THEY COULD DO, HUH?
-*SIGH*-
SNIKT
ALL RIGHT. WE MIGHT AS WELL GET THIS OVER WITH...

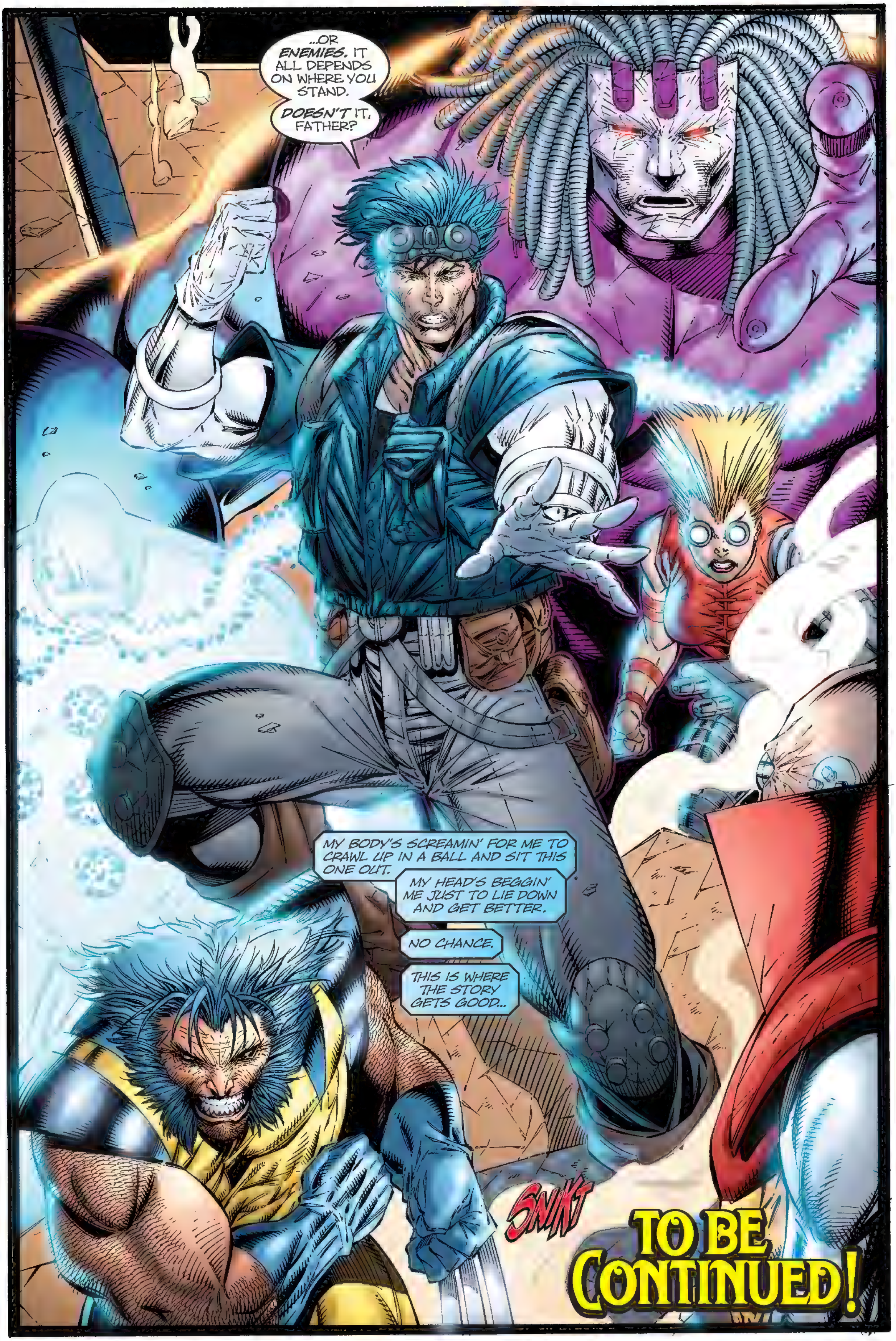

I COME TO SWINGIN'.
NO IDEA WHERE I AM, NO CONCEPT O' HOW LONG I'VE BEEN OUT.
THERE'S NO SIGN O' DEADPOOL...
...BUT HIS GOON SQUAD IS OUT IN FORCE.
WHATEVER THEY SHOT ME UP WITH, IT HASN'T CLEARED OUT O' MY SYSTEM YET.
MY VISION'S BLURRED AND IT FEELS LIKE MY BRAIN'S BEEN WRAPPED IN GAUZE.
I GET MOMENTS O' CLARITY, BUT FOR THE MOST PART, MY HEAD IS USELESS.
I USE THE PARTS THAT WORK.
RAAAAAHH!
FIRST THING I NOTICE ABOUT THE SCOURGE IS THEY ALL STINK O' **FEAR.**
IT'S A FUNNY THING, SOMETHING I CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IN MY CURRENT FRAME O' MIND.
THESE GUYS ARE TOUGH, PROFESSIONALS -- THEY **SHOULD** BE PUTTIN' UP MORE OF A FIGHT.
BUT THEY FOLD EASIER THAN LAWN CHAIRS.
THEIR LACK O' CONFIDENCE IS ALMOST PALPABLE.
I FEED ON IT LIKE A MAN STARVED.
AND THEN I CATCH A WHIFF O' WHAT'S GOT 'EM ALL ON EDGE...

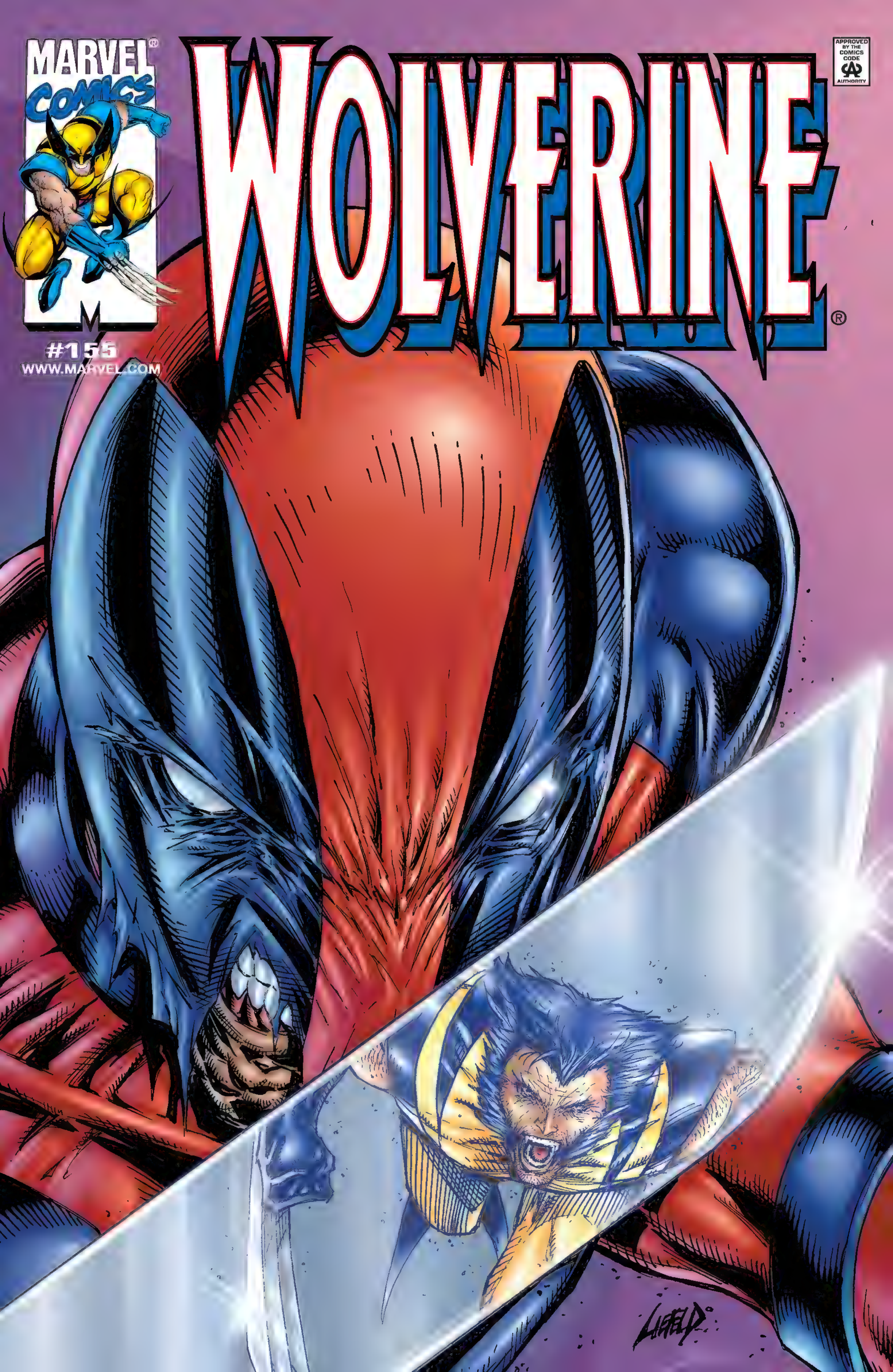

...THE BURNIN' STENCH O' PURE, UNADULTERATED EVIL.
FASCINATING.
EVEN IN YOUR CURRENT DRUG-ADDLED STATE, YOU COULD SENSE MY PRESENCE.
DO YOU EVER STOP TO MARVEL AT THE SCOPE OF THE GIFTS YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN?
THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE GO THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT SIGHT, UNABLE TO HEAR... UNABLE TO FEEL...
...BUT YOU EXPERIENCE LIFE ON A LEVEL UNIMAGINED EVEN BY THE HEALTHIEST OF HUMAN SPECIMENS.
YOU'RE THE BEST AT WHAT YOU DO... AND YOU TAKE THAT FOR GRANTED, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE SO ACCUSTOMED TO WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU'VE BECOME THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE THE BEAUTY IN THE GIFTS NATURE HAS BESTOWED UPON YOU.
I GOT NO PATIENCE FOR SPEECHES, BUB, SO YOU CAN SAVE YOUR RAP FOR --
I'M WELL AWARE OF YOUR CAPACITY FOR THE MOST BRUTAL FORMS OF DEFIANCE, WOLVERINE.
WE'LL HAVE NONE OF THAT HERE.
THRAK
AND A MAN WITH SENSES AS KEEN AS YOURS SHOULD APPRECIATE THE PROMISE THAT I CAN MAKE YOU FEEL PAIN UNLIKE ANY YOU'VE EVER EXPERIENCED, IF YOU CHOOSE TO RESIST ME FURTHER.
WE ARE THE FUTURE, WOLVERINE...
...THE SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS AND ILLS OLDER THAN EVEN YOU AND YOUR KIND.


"WE ARE THE *WATCH-TOWER.*"
HOW DOES SHE LOOK?
SHE'S IN A CHEMICAL BATH WITH A HOSE IN HER MOUTH, YOU IDIOT.
WHAT KIND OF ***QUESTION*** IS THAT?
WHAT DO ***YOU*** CARE, ANYWAY?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'VE GOT ANY ***STAKE*** IN WHAT HAPPENS TO HER NOW.
YOUR OBLIGATION TO THIS WHOLE DEAL ENDED THE MINUTE WE SHOWED UP AT THE FRONT GATE WITH WOLVIE PASSED OUT IN THE BACK SEAT.
MINE WAS JUST ***BEGINNING.***
THERESA, I... I KNOW YOU CAN'T HEAR ME, BUT...
...EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT, OKAY? THIS SEEMS BAD, I KNOW, AND IT ISN'T THE WAY YOU'D HAVE ***WANTED*** ME TO DO THINGS...
...BUT THEY'RE GONNA MAKE YOU ***WHOLE*** AGAIN.
THEY ***PROMISED*** ME.⊗
⊗ Siryn was gravely injured in X-FORCE #91 — Mark


AH, YOU WAKE AGAIN. WONDERFUL.
YOUR HEALING FACTOR REALLY IS QUITE EXTRAORDINARY, MY FRIEND.
HAD WE DRAWN AS MUCH BLOOD FROM A LESSER MAN, WE WOULD HAVE *LOST* HIM LONG AGO.
THE SPEED OF YOUR REGENERATIVE ABILITIES IS MIND-BOGGLING.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
SURELY YOU'VE GUESSED BY NOW -- THIS IS ALL ABOUT YOUR HEALING POWERS.
NATURE HAS ALWAYS INTENDED FOR YOU TO FULFILL A SPECIFIC ROLE.
YOU AND *ALL* MUTANTS.
THE WATCHTOWER IS FIGHTING TO *HEAL* A SICK WORLD -- AND YOU HAVE JUST BECOME OUR GREATEST *WEAPON.*
THERE HE IS!
BUT THE *ADMINISTRATOR* IS IN THERE, TOO!
NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT. WE KNEW WE'D HAVE TO CONFRONT HIM EVENTUALLY.
CARGO, GET READY TO TAKE US IN.
AND *HARDWIRE,* IF YOU READ ME -- IT'S TIME TO HIT IT, BIG FELLA!


SOMEWHERE AMID THE BARRAGE O' TRANQUILIZERS AND THE CONTINUED BLOODLETTING, IT OCCURS TO ME THAT I'VE LOST THE PLOT.
IT HAPPENS. GETTIN' HUNG UP ON STUFF LIKE THIS COMES WITH THE TERRITORY.
ALL IT TAKES IS A SINGLE EVENT...
...AND, SUDDENLY EVERYTHING CHANGES.
GOOD WORK, CARGO!
NOW JUST PRAY THE OLD CODGER'S AS RESILIENT AS HIS REPUTATION WOULD HAVE US *BELIEVE.*
SENSING GUARDS APPROACH, I AM.
THEN SPREAD OUT AND LET'S *HANDLE* IT, GANG.
WHERE ARE YOU, HARDWIRE? WE'RE *WAITING* ON YOU...!
ENCOUNTERED INTERFERENCE. DEALT WITH IT.
KRESSSH
?
NO WORRIES, OLD FRIEND. GRAB WHISKERS THERE AND YOU'RE GOLDEN!
KAK
WE'LL TAKE THE INTERFERENCE AS IT COMES.
WOK
AND HOW ABOUT YOU, OLD MAN? YOU READY TO *TRAVEL?*
IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, BY THE WAY...!
WHO *ARE* YOU PEOPLE?
FRIENDS...


...OR *ENEMIES.* IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU STAND.
DOESN'T IT, FATHER?
MY BODY'S SCREAMIN' FOR ME TO CRAWL UP IN A BALL AND SIT THIS ONE OUT.
MY HEAD'S BEGGIN' ME JUST TO LIE DOWN AND GET BETTER.
NO CHANCE.
THIS IS WHERE THE STORY GETS GOOD...
SNIKT
TO BE CONTINUED!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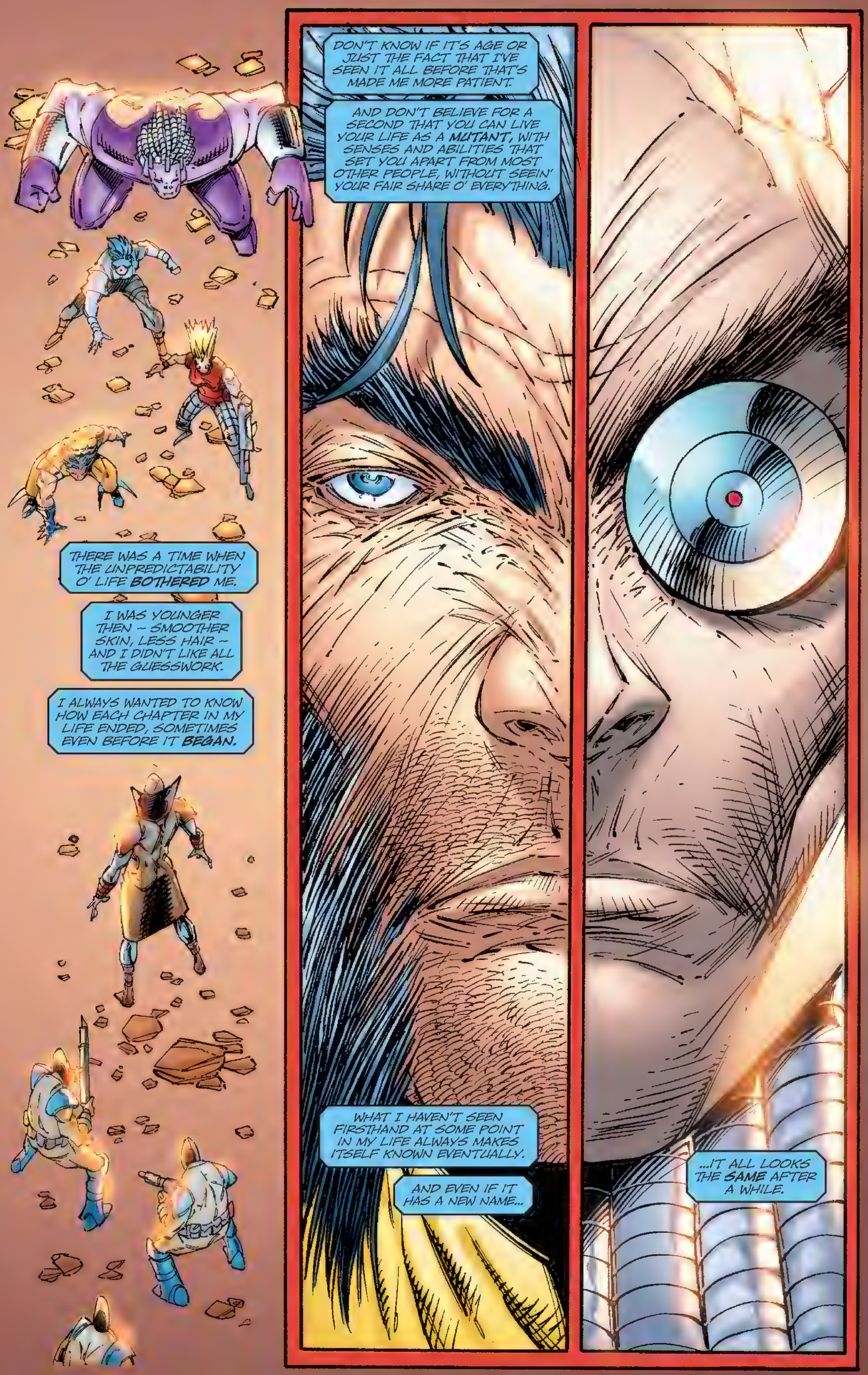
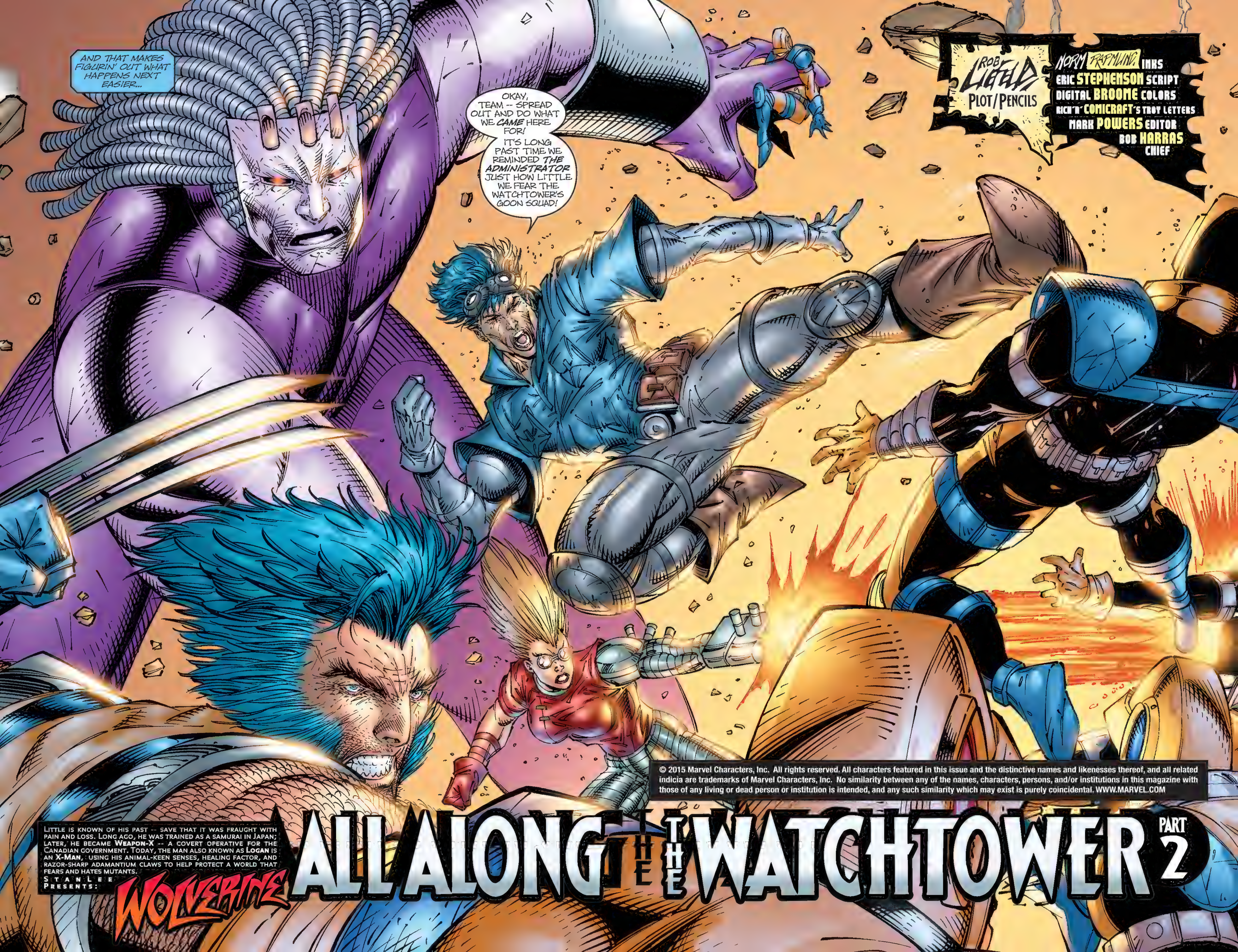

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE UNPREDICTABILITY O' LIFE **BOTHERED** ME.
I WAS YOUNGER THEN -- SMOOTHER SKIN, LESS HAIR -- AND I DIDN'T LIKE ALL THE GUESSWORK.
I ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW HOW EACH CHAPTER IN MY LIFE ENDED, SOMETIMES EVEN BEFORE IT **BEGAN.**
DON'T KNOW IF IT'S AGE OR JUST THE FACT THAT I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE THAT'S MADE ME MORE PATIENT.
AND DON'T BELIEVE FOR A SECOND THAT YOU CAN LIVE YOUR LIFE AS A **MUTANT,** WITH SENSES AND ABILITIES THAT SET YOU APART FROM MOST OTHER PEOPLE, WITHOUT SEEIN' YOUR FAIR SHARE O' EVERYTHING.
WHAT I HAVEN'T SEEN FIRSTHAND AT SOME POINT IN MY LIFE ALWAYS MAKES ITSELF KNOWN EVENTUALLY.
AND EVEN IF IT HAS A NEW NAME...
...IT ALL LOOKS THE **SAME** AFTER A WHILE.


AND THAT MAKES FIGURIN' OUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT EASIER...
OKAY, TEAM -- SPREAD OUT AND DO WHAT WE *CAME* HERE FOR! IT'S LONG PAST TIME WE REMINDED ***THE ADMINISTRATOR*** JUST HOW LITTLE WE FEAR THE WATCHTOWER'S GOON SQUAD!

ROB LIEFELD PLOT/PENCILS
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BOB HARRAS CHIEF

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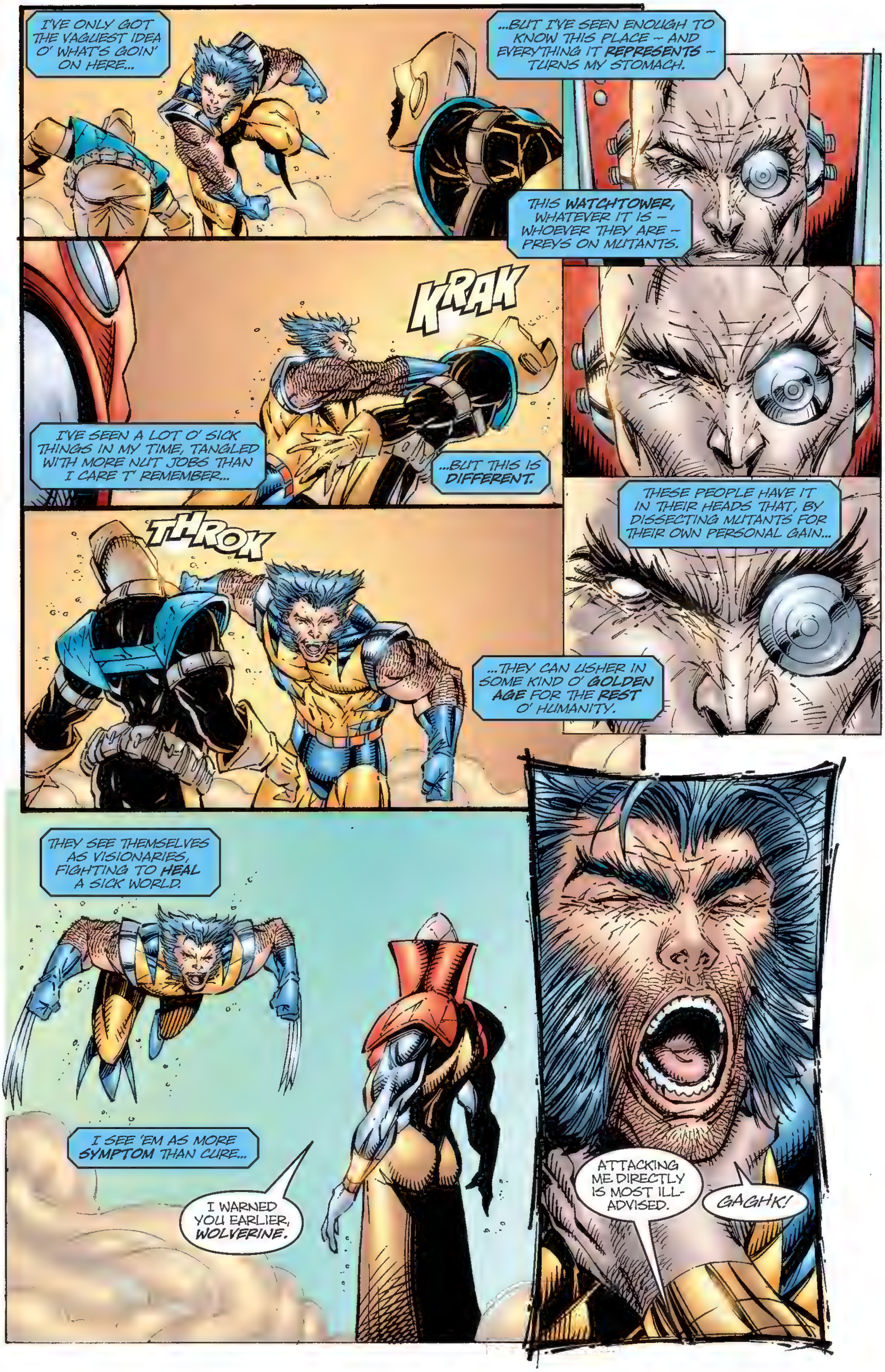
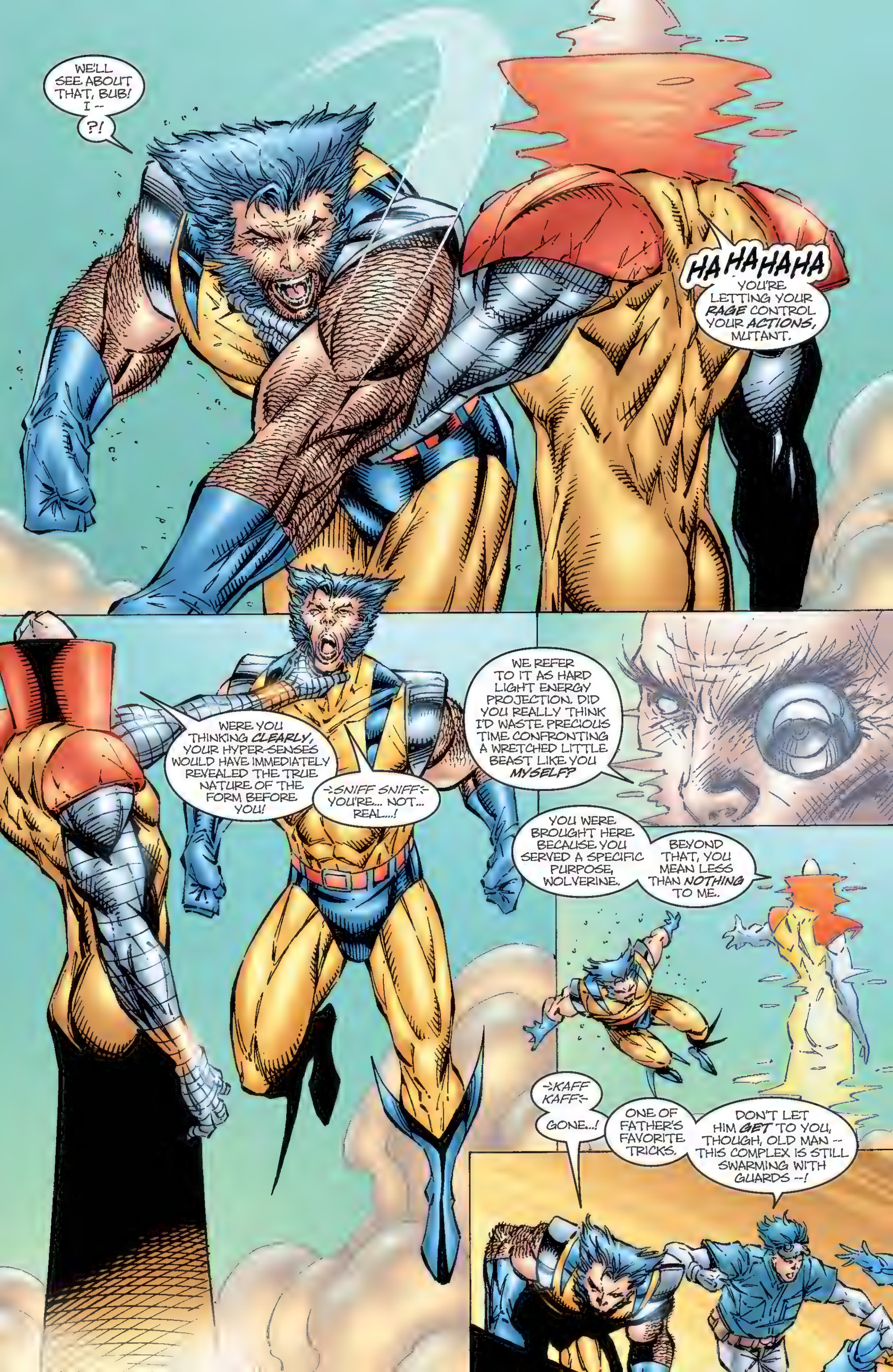
Little is known of his past -- save that it was fraught with pain and loss. Long ago, he was trained as a samurai in Japan; later, he became **Weapon-X** -- a covert operative for the Canadian government. Today, the man also known as **Logan** is an **X-Man**, using his animal-keen senses, healing factor, and razor-sharp adamantium claws to help protect a world that fears and hates mutants.

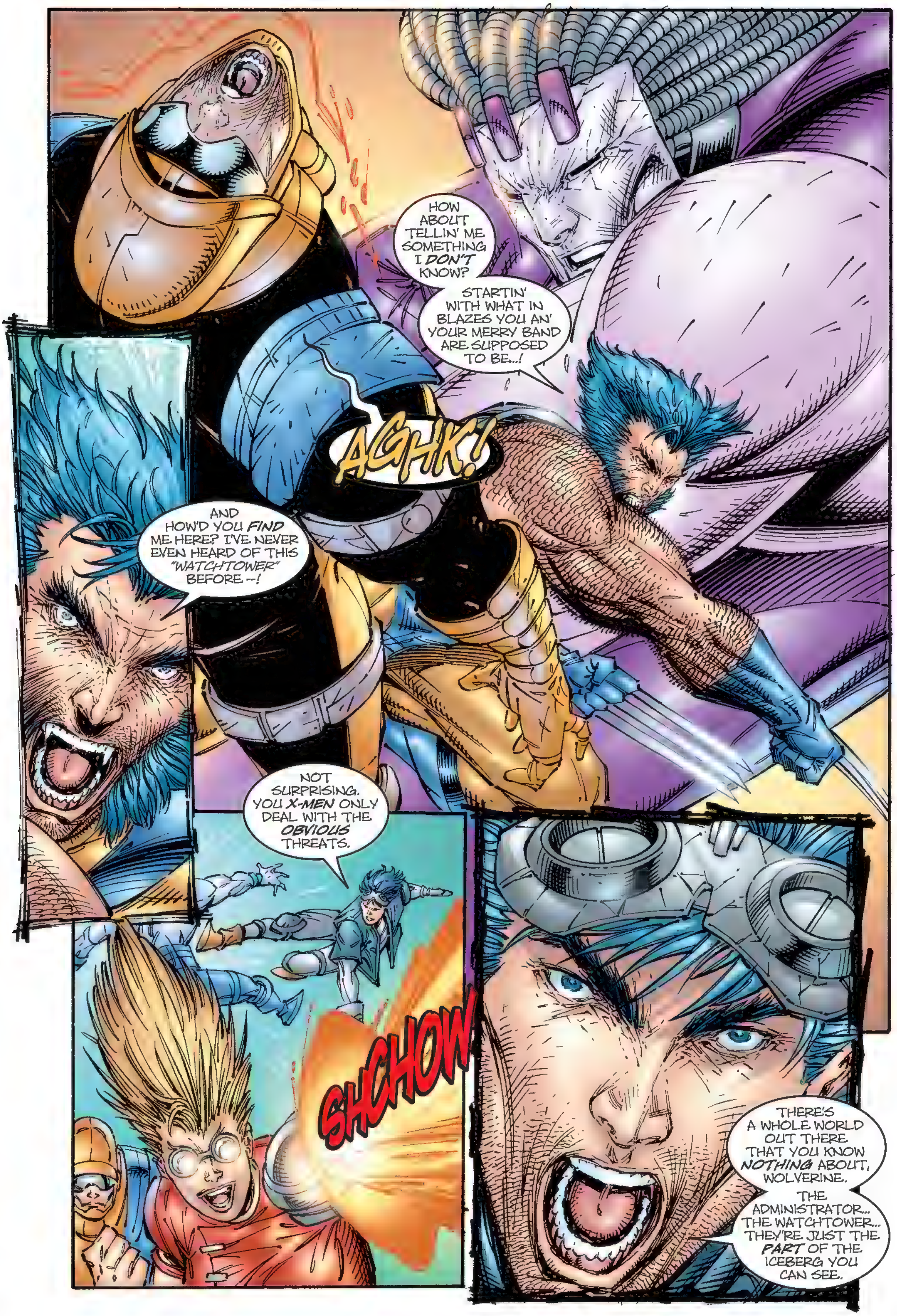
STAN LEE PRESENTS:

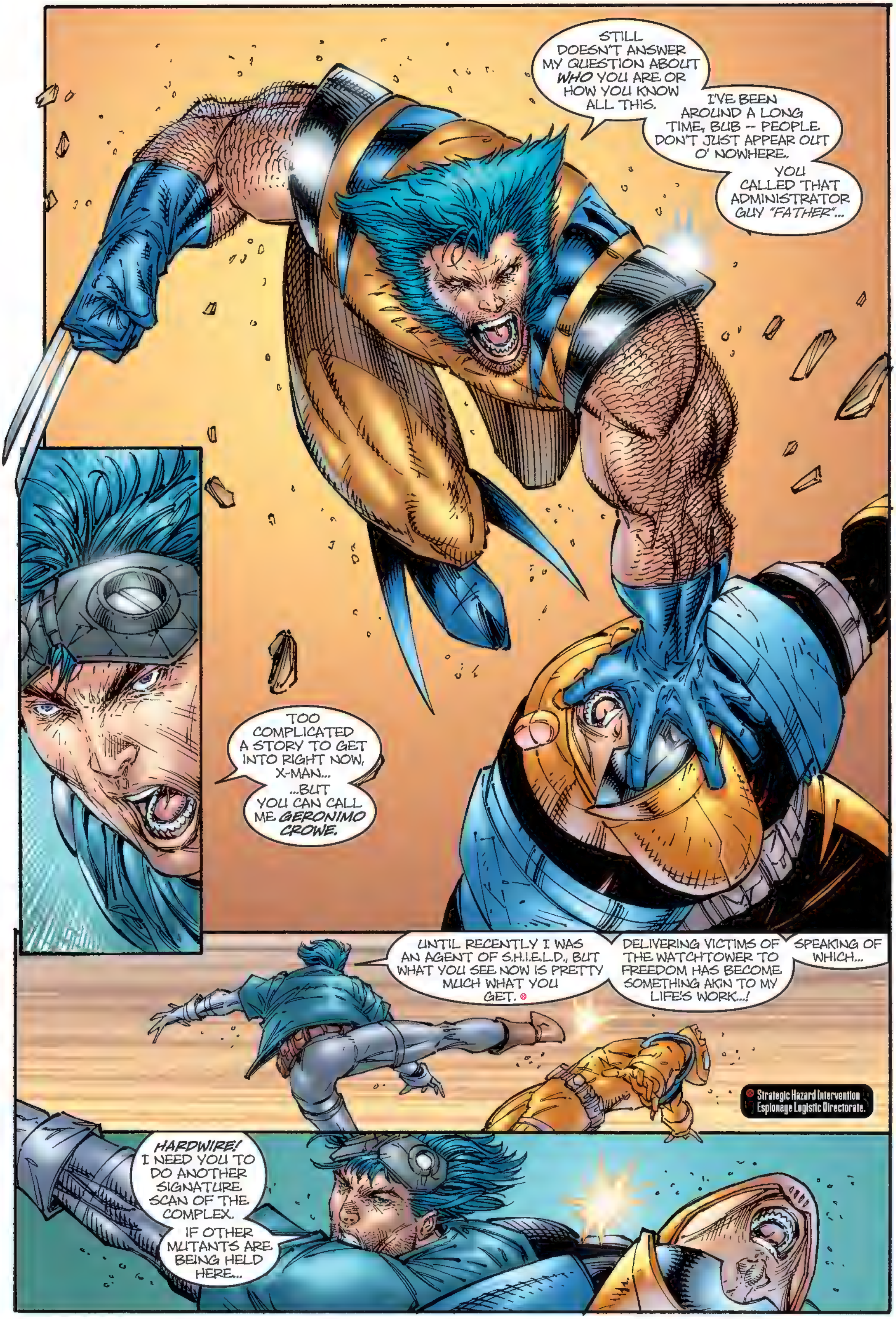
WOLVERINE

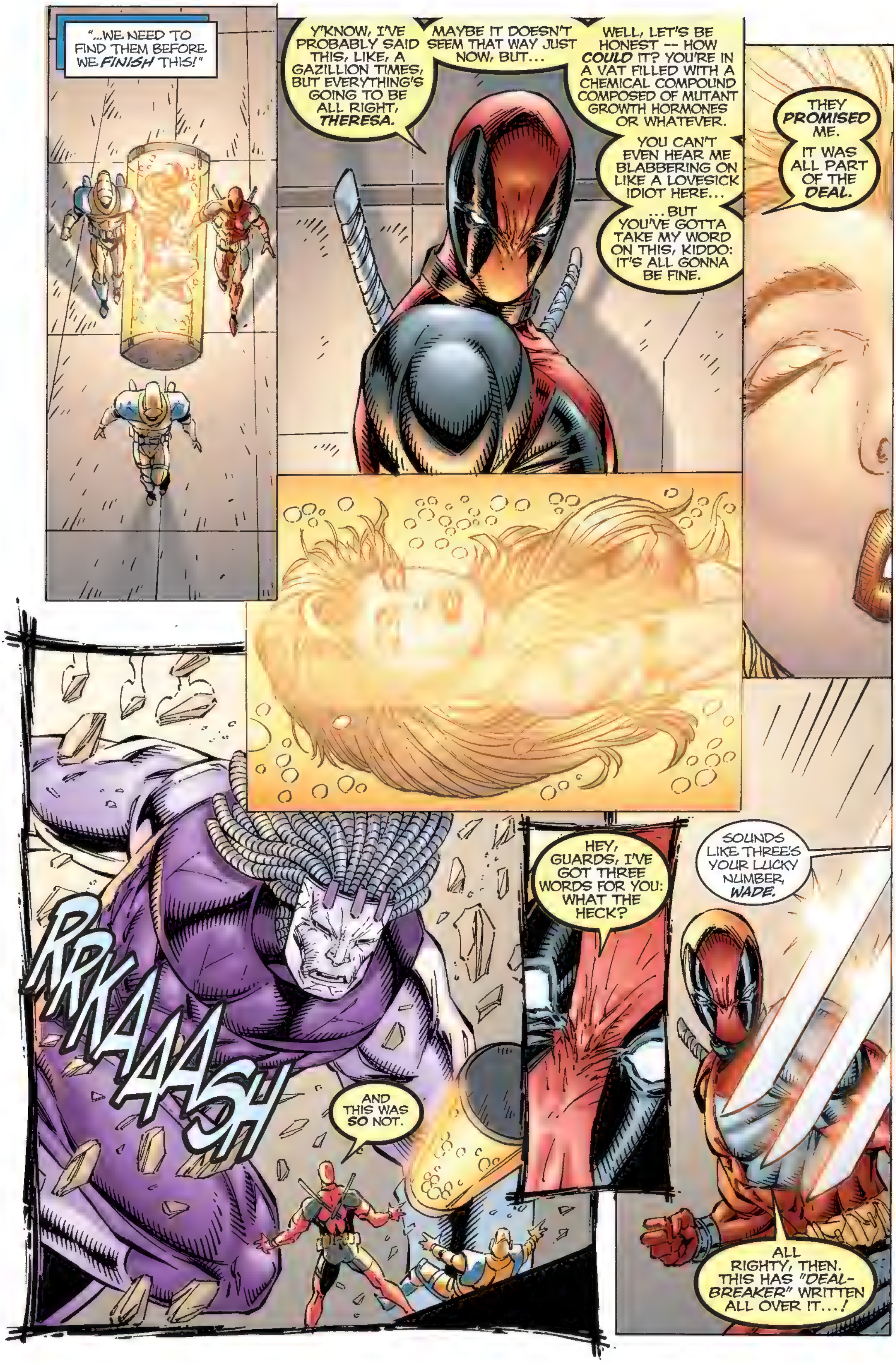
ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER PART 2

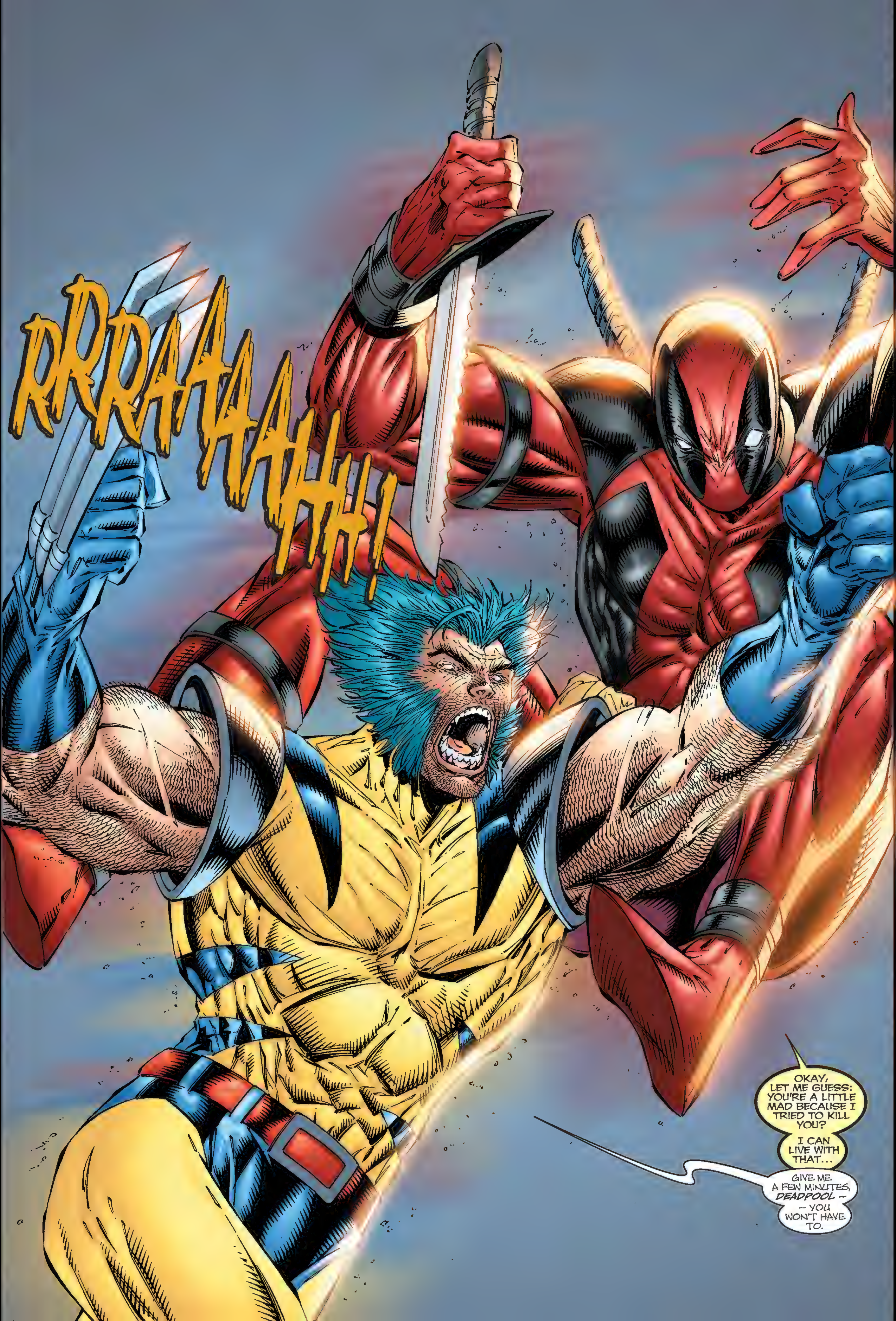

I'VE ONLY GOT THE VAGUEST IDEA O' WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE...
...BUT I'VE SEEN ENOUGH TO KNOW THIS PLACE -- AND EVERYTHING IT **REPRESENTS** -- TURNS MY STOMACH.
THIS **WATCHTOWER,** WHATEVER IT IS -- WHOEVER THEY ARE -- PREYS ON MUTANTS.
KRAK
I'VE SEEN A LOT O' SICK THINGS IN MY TIME, TANGLED WITH MORE NUT JOBS THAN I CARE T' REMEMBER...
...BUT THIS IS **DIFFERENT.**
THROK
THESE PEOPLE HAVE IT IN THEIR HEADS THAT, BY DISSECTING MUTANTS FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL GAIN...
...THEY CAN USHER IN SOME KIND O' **GOLDEN AGE** FOR THE **REST** O' HUMANITY.
THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS VISIONARIES, FIGHTING TO **HEAL** A SICK WORLD.
I SEE 'EM AS MORE **SYMPTOM** THAN CURE...
I WARNED YOU EARLIER, **WOLVERINE.**
ATTACKING ME DIRECTLY IS MOST ILL-ADVISED.
GAGHK!

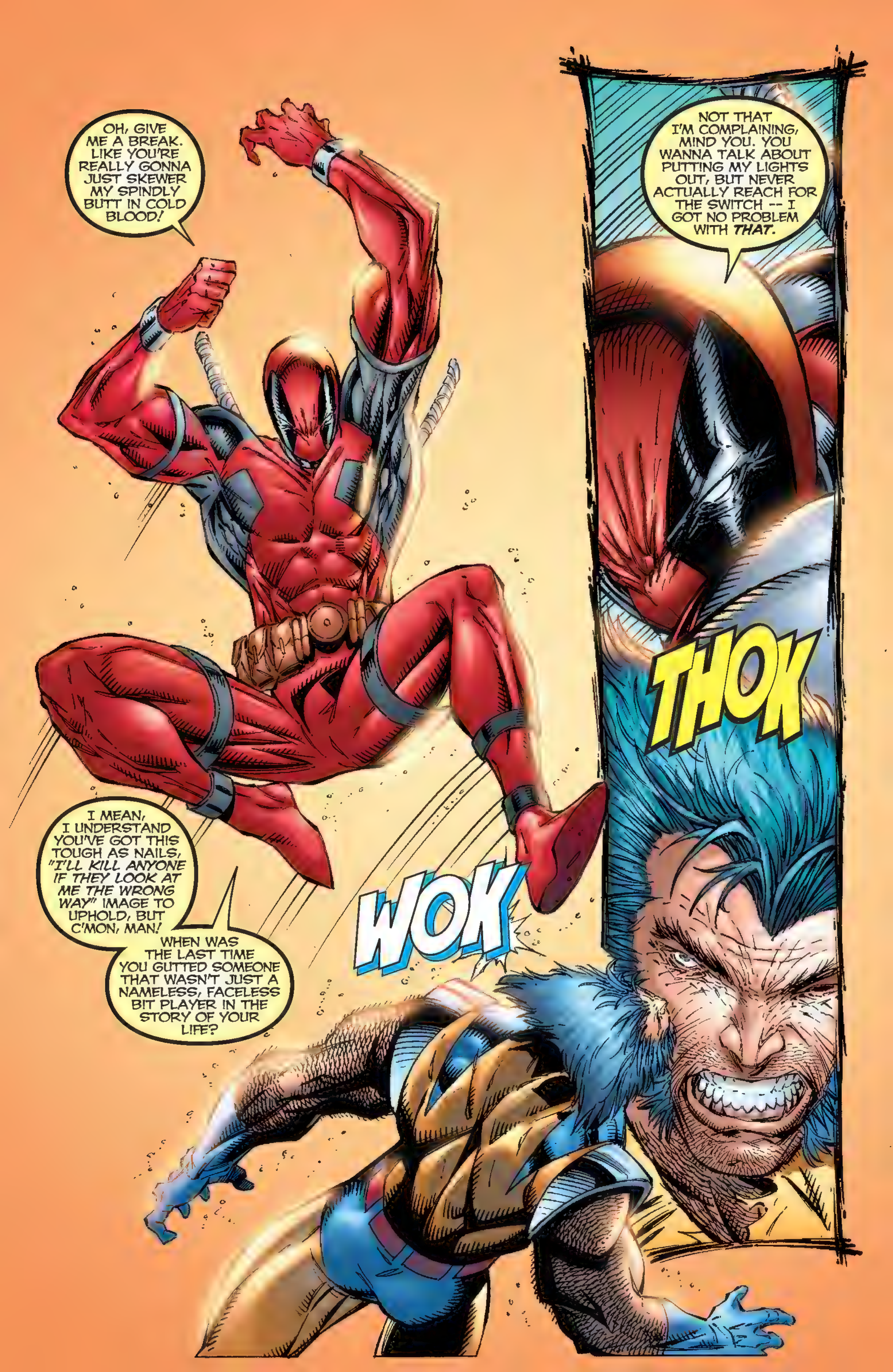

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, BUB! I --
?!
HAHAHAHA
YOU'RE LETTING YOUR *RAGE* CONTROL YOUR *ACTIONS,* MUTANT.
WERE YOU THINKING *CLEARLY,* YOUR HYPER-SENSES WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY REVEALED THE TRUE NATURE OF THE FORM BEFORE YOU!
-SNIFF SNIFF- YOU'RE... NOT... REAL...!
WE REFER TO IT AS HARD LIGHT ENERGY PROJECTION. DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D WASTE PRECIOUS TIME CONFRONTING A WRETCHED LITTLE BEAST LIKE YOU *MYSELF?*
YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE BECAUSE YOU SERVED A SPECIFIC PURPOSE, WOLVERINE.
BEYOND THAT, YOU MEAN LESS THAN *NOTHING* TO ME.
-KAFF KAFF-
GONE...!
ONE OF FATHER'S FAVORITE TRICKS.
DON'T LET HIM *GET* TO YOU, THOUGH, OLD MAN -- THIS COMPLEX IS STILL SWARMING WITH GUARDS --!

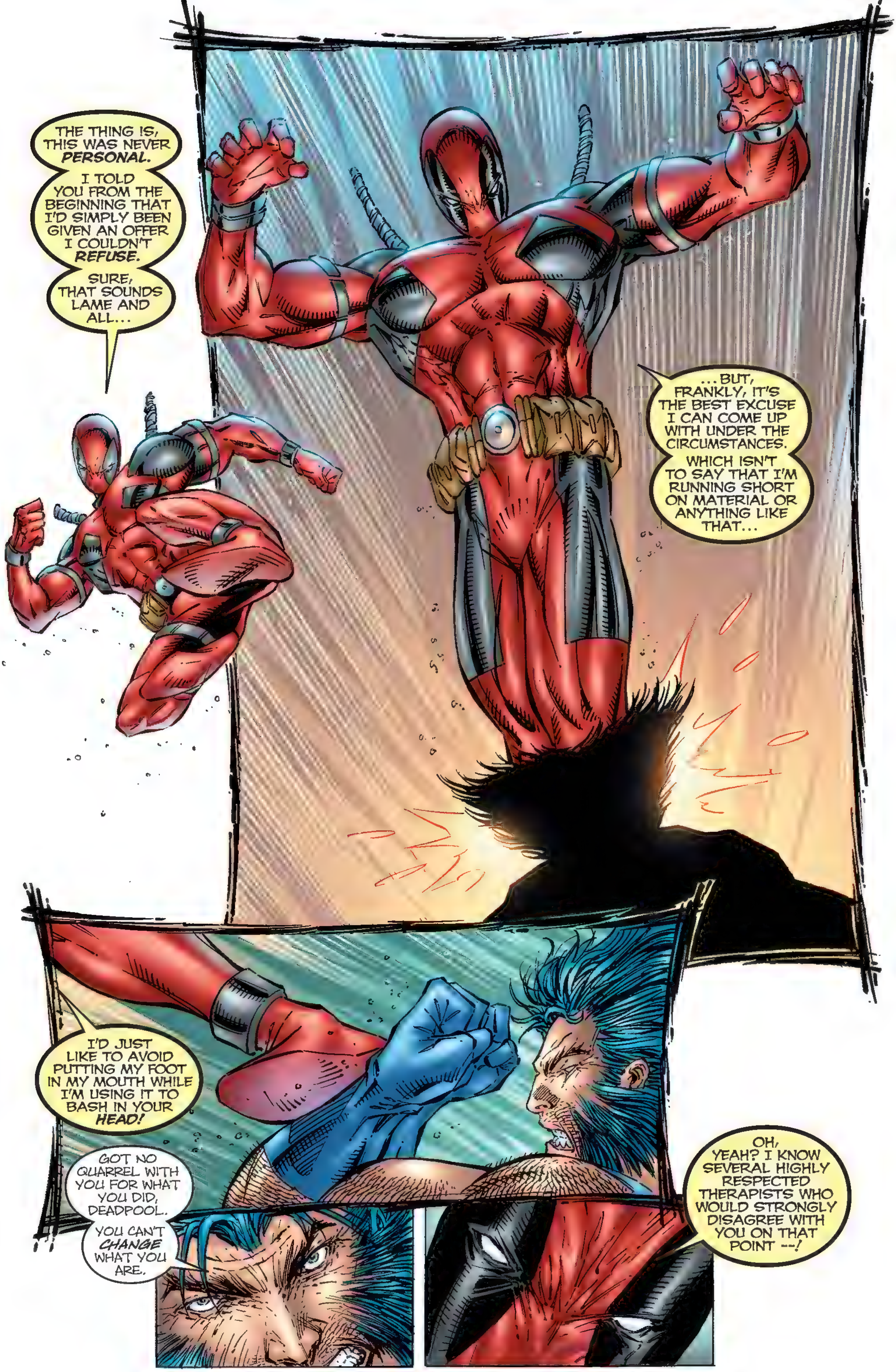

HOW ABOUT TELLIN' ME SOMETHING I *DON'T* KNOW?
STARTIN' WITH WHAT IN BLAZES YOU AN' YOUR MERRY BAND ARE SUPPOSED TO BE...!
AGHK!
AND HOW'D YOU *FIND* ME HERE? I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF THIS "WATCHTOWER" BEFORE--!
NOT SURPRISING. YOU *X-MEN* ONLY DEAL WITH THE *OBVIOUS* THREATS.
SHCHOW
THERE'S A WHOLE WORLD OUT THERE THAT YOU KNOW *NOTHING* ABOUT, WOLVERINE.
THE ADMINISTRATOR... THE WATCHTOWER... THEY'RE JUST THE *PART* OF THE ICEBERG YOU CAN SEE.

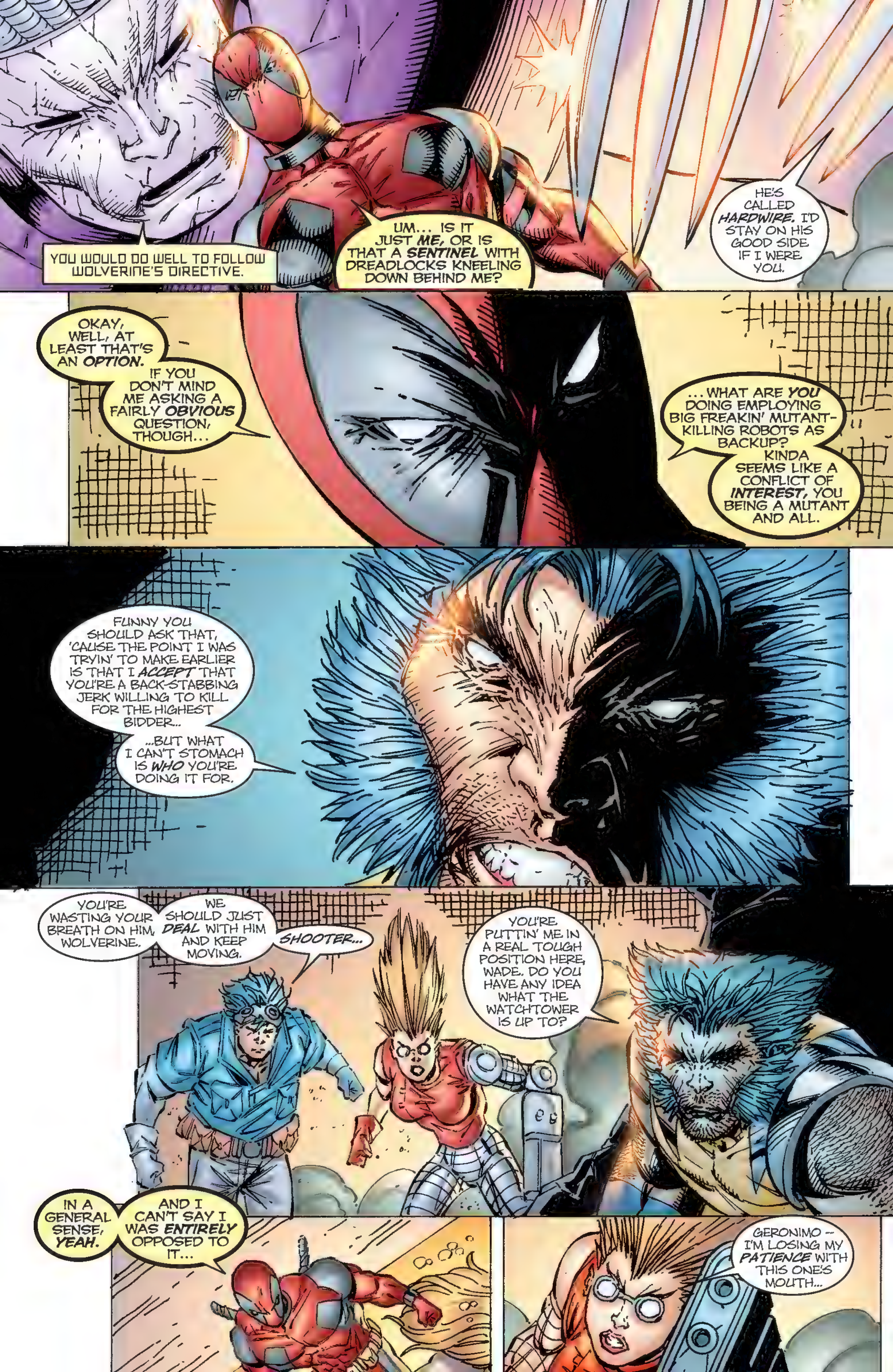

STILL DOESN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION ABOUT *WHO* YOU ARE OR HOW YOU KNOW ALL THIS.
I'VE BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME, BUB -- PEOPLE DON'T JUST APPEAR OUT O' NOWHERE.
YOU CALLED THAT ADMINISTRATOR GUY "FATHER"...
TOO COMPLICATED A STORY TO GET INTO RIGHT NOW, X-MAN... ...BUT YOU CAN CALL ME *GERONIMO CROWE.*
UNTIL RECENTLY I WAS AN AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D., BUT WHAT YOU SEE NOW IS PRETTY MUCH WHAT YOU GET.
DELIVERING VICTIMS OF THE WATCHTOWER TO FREEDOM HAS BECOME SOMETHING AKIN TO MY LIFE'S WORK...!
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistic Directorate.
HARDWIRE! I NEED YOU TO DO ANOTHER SIGNATURE SCAN OF THE COMPLEX.
IF OTHER MUTANTS ARE BEING HELD HERE...

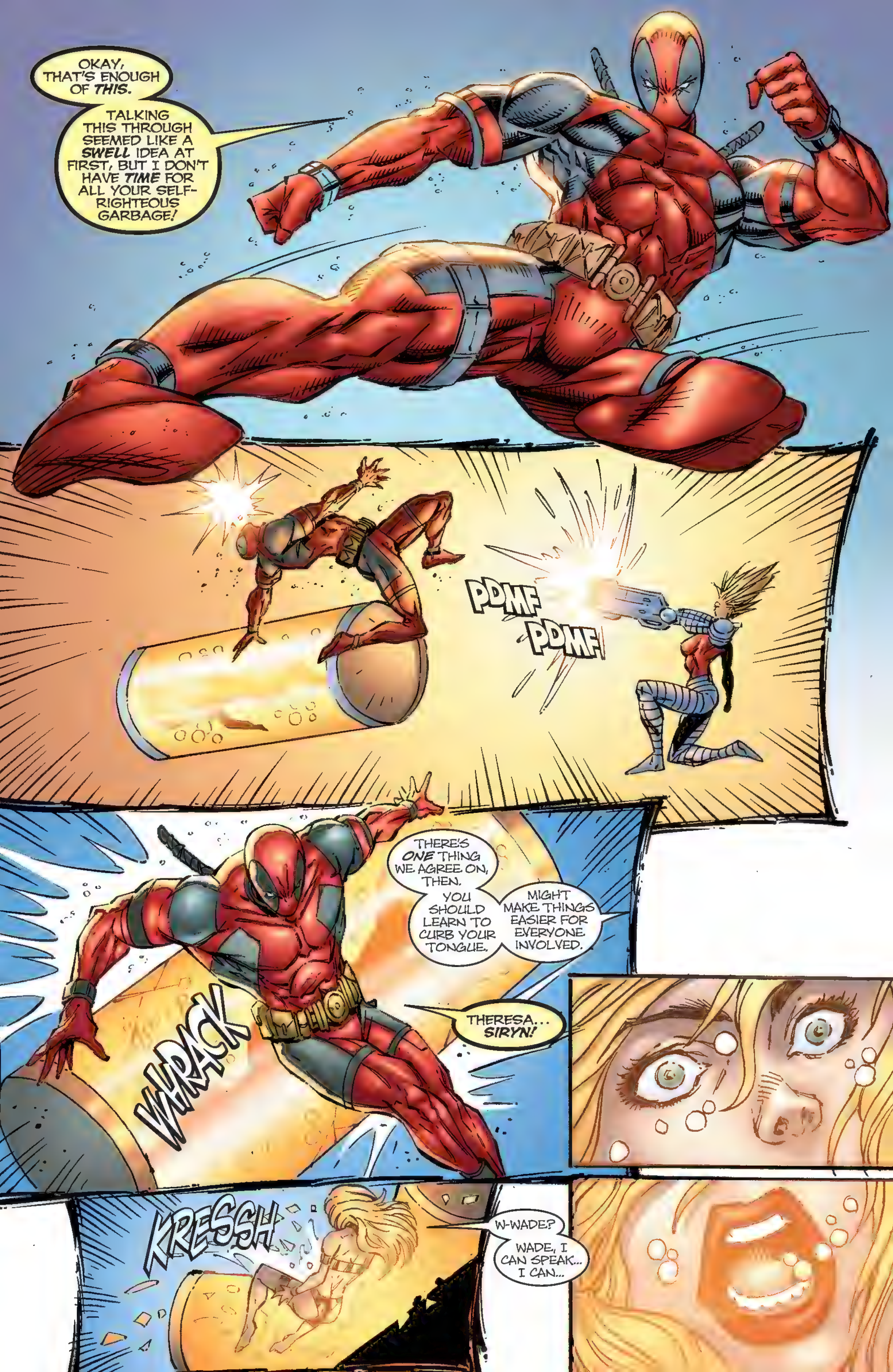

"...WE NEED TO FIND THEM BEFORE WE *FINISH* THIS!"
Y'KNOW, I'VE PROBABLY SAID THIS, LIKE, A GAZILLION TIMES, BUT EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, ***THERESA.***
MAYBE IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT WAY JUST NOW, BUT...
WELL, LET'S BE HONEST -- HOW ***COULD*** IT? YOU'RE IN A VAT FILLED WITH A CHEMICAL COMPOUND COMPOSED OF MUTANT GROWTH HORMONES OR WHATEVER.
YOU CAN'T EVEN HEAR ME BLABBERING ON LIKE A LOVESICK IDIOT HERE...
...BUT YOU'VE GOTTA TAKE MY WORD ON THIS, KIDDO: IT'S ALL GONNA BE FINE.
THEY ***PROMISED*** ME.
IT WAS ALL PART OF THE ***DEAL.***
RRKAAAASH
AND THIS WAS ***SO*** NOT.
HEY, GUARDS, I'VE GOT THREE WORDS FOR YOU: WHAT THE HECK?
SOUNDS LIKE THREE'S YOUR LUCKY NUMBER, ***WADE.***
ALL RIGHTY, THEN. THIS HAS ***"DEAL-BREAKER"*** WRITTEN ALL OVER IT...!

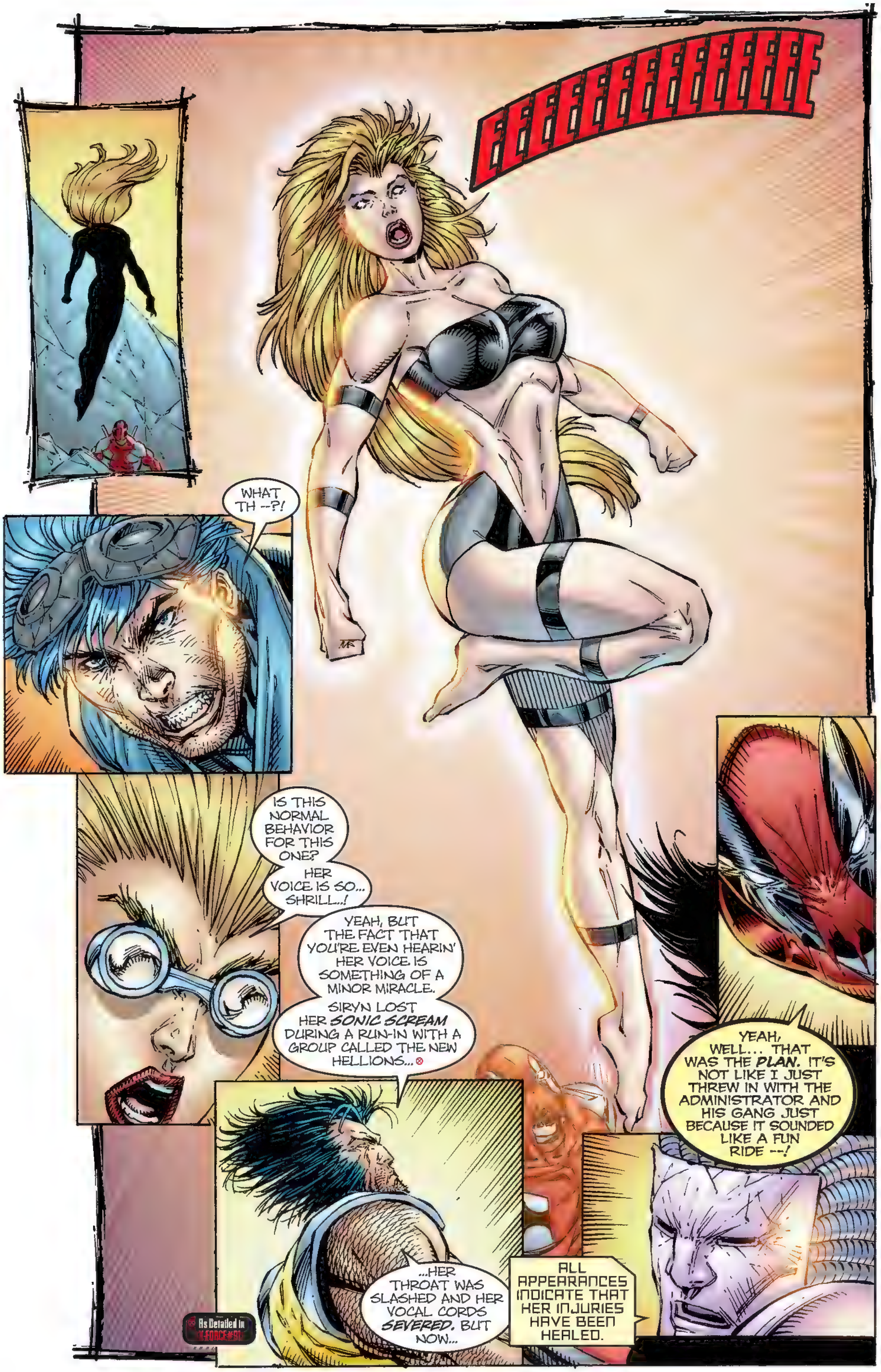

RRRAAAAAHH!
OKAY, LET ME GUESS: YOU'RE A LITTLE MAD BECAUSE I TRIED TO KILL YOU?
I CAN LIVE WITH THAT...
GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES, DEADPOOL --
-- YOU WON'T HAVE TO.

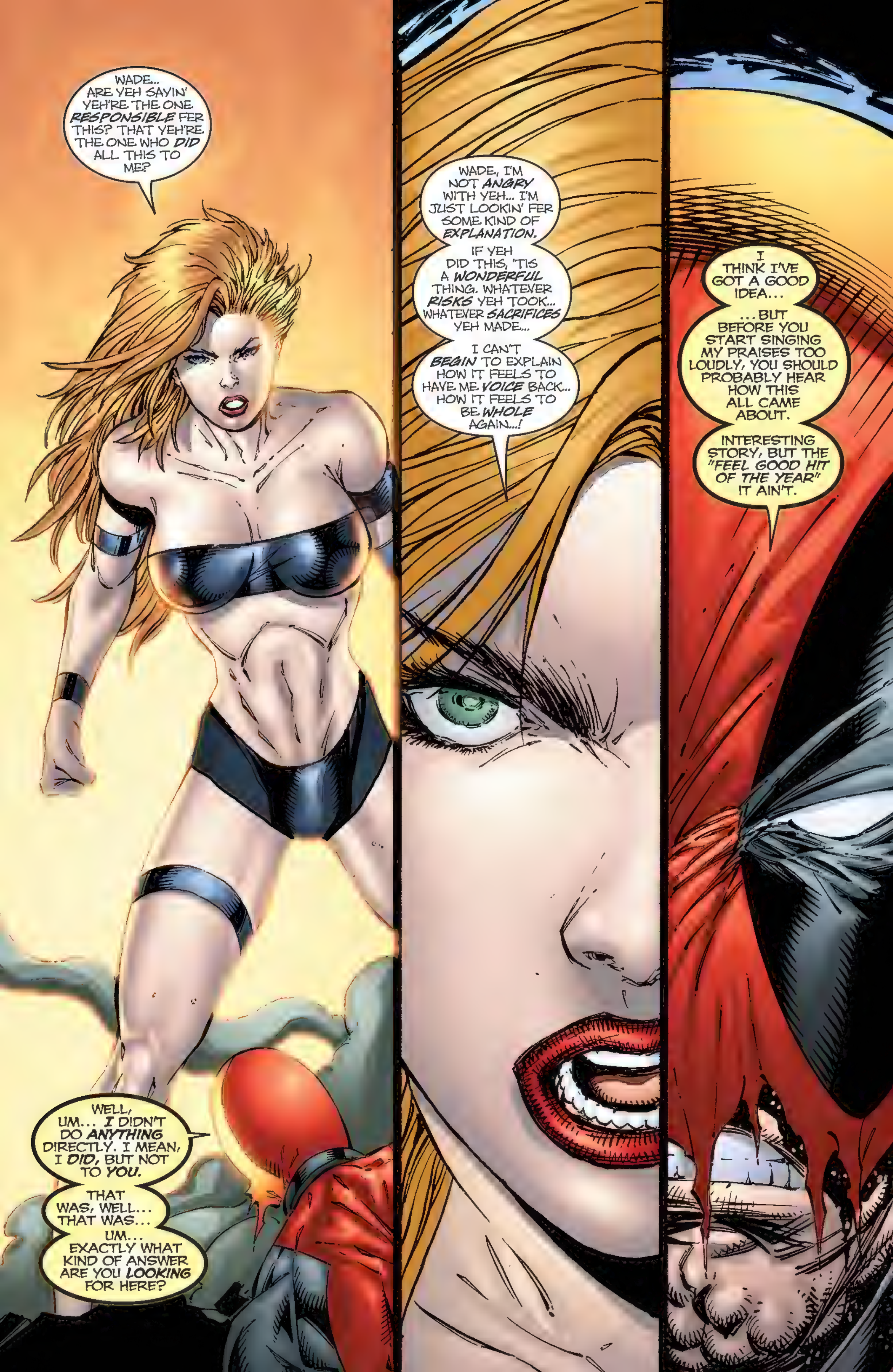

OH, GIVE ME A BREAK. LIKE YOU'RE REALLY GONNA JUST SKEWER MY SPINDLY BUTT IN COLD BLOOD!
I MEAN, I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE GOT THIS TOUGH AS NAILS, *"I'LL KILL ANYONE IF THEY LOOK AT ME THE WRONG WAY"* IMAGE TO UPHOLD, BUT C'MON, MAN!
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU GUTTED SOMEONE THAT WASN'T JUST A NAMELESS, FACELESS BIT PLAYER IN THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE?
WOK
NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING, MIND YOU. YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT PUTTING MY LIGHTS OUT, BUT NEVER ACTUALLY REACH FOR THE SWITCH -- I GOT NO PROBLEM WITH *THAT.*
THOK

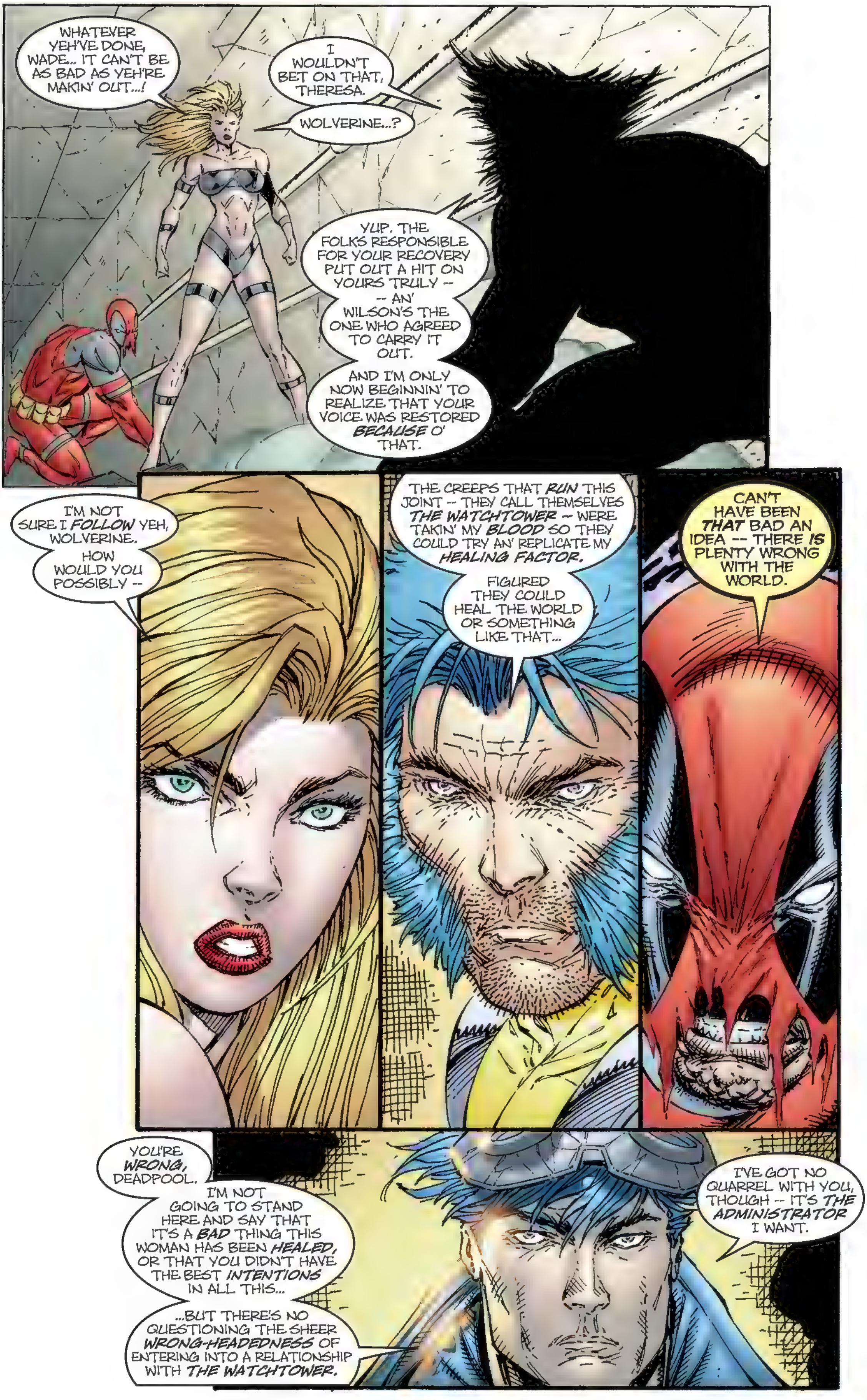

THE THING IS, THIS WAS NEVER *PERSONAL.*
I TOLD YOU FROM THE BEGINNING THAT I'D SIMPLY BEEN GIVEN AN OFFER I COULDN'T *REFUSE.*
SURE, THAT SOUNDS LAME AND ALL...
...BUT, FRANKLY, IT'S THE BEST EXCUSE I CAN COME UP WITH UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
WHICH ISN'T TO SAY THAT I'M RUNNING SHORT ON MATERIAL OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
I'D JUST LIKE TO AVOID PUTTING MY FOOT IN MY MOUTH WHILE I'M USING IT TO BASH IN YOUR *HEAD!*
GOT NO QUARREL WITH YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID, DEADPOOL.
YOU CAN'T *CHANGE* WHAT YOU ARE.
OH, YEAH? I KNOW SEVERAL HIGHLY RESPECTED THERAPISTS WHO WOULD STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH YOU ON THAT POINT --!

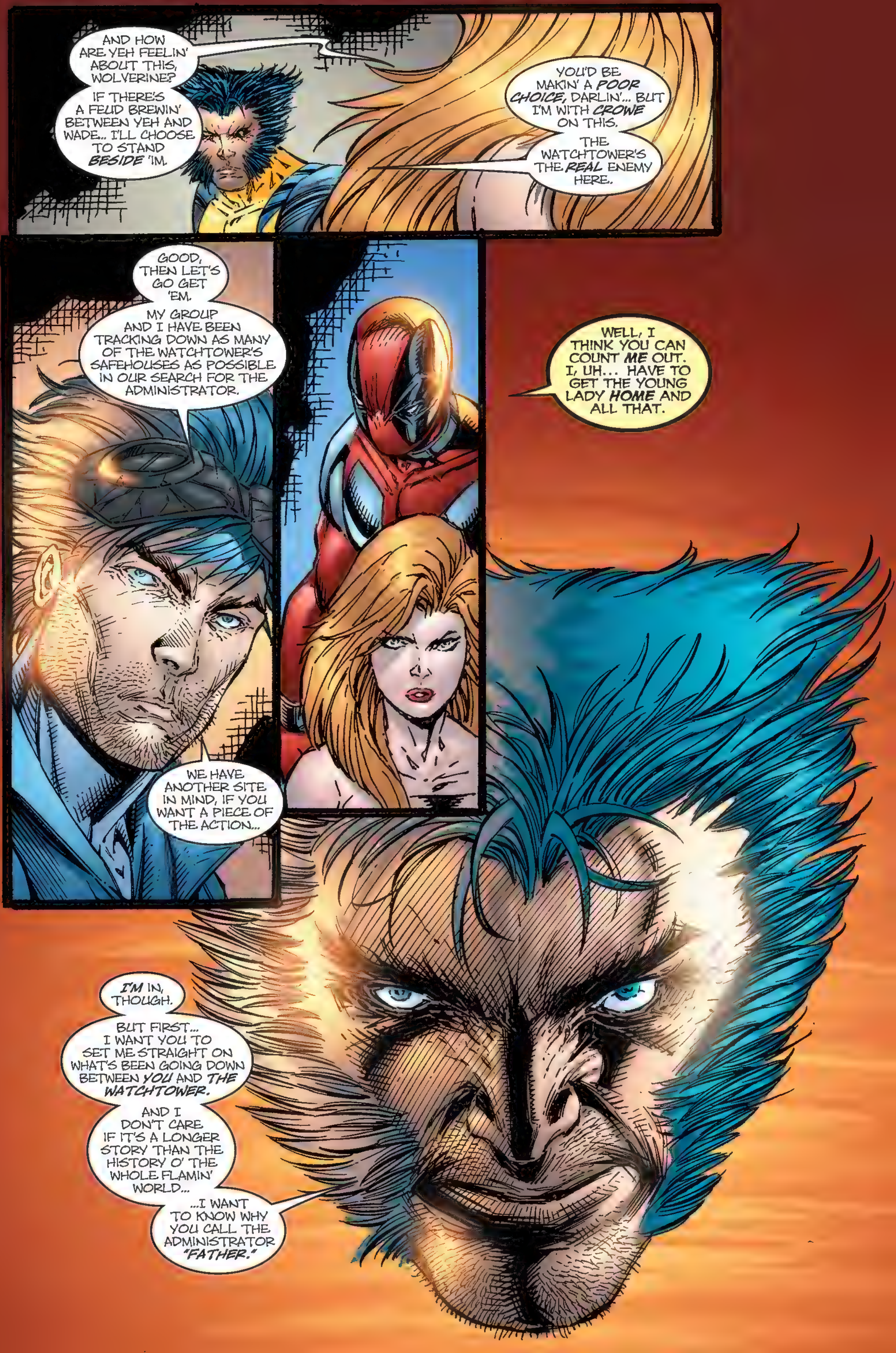

YOU WOULD DO WELL TO FOLLOW WOLVERINE'S DIRECTIVE.
UM... IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THAT A SENTINEL WITH DREADLOCKS KNEELING DOWN BEHIND ME?
HE'S CALLED HARDWIRE. I'D STAY ON HIS GOOD SIDE IF I WERE YOU.
OKAY, WELL, AT LEAST THAT'S AN OPTION.
IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING A FAIRLY OBVIOUS QUESTION, THOUGH...
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING EMPLOYING BIG FREAKIN' MUTANT-KILLING ROBOTS AS BACKUP?
KINDA SEEMS LIKE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST, YOU BEING A MUTANT AND ALL.
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK THAT, 'CAUSE THE POINT I WAS TRYIN' TO MAKE EARLIER IS THAT I ACCEPT THAT YOU'RE A BACK-STABBING JERK WILLING TO KILL FOR THE HIGHEST BIDDER...
...BUT WHAT I CAN'T STOMACH IS WHO YOU'RE DOING IT FOR.
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR BREATH ON HIM, WOLVERINE.
WE SHOULD JUST DEAL WITH HIM AND KEEP MOVING.
SHOOTER...
YOU'RE PUTTIN' ME IN A REAL TOUGH POSITION HERE, WADE. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THE WATCHTOWER IS UP TO?
IN A GENERAL SENSE, YEAH.
AND I CAN'T SAY I WAS ENTIRELY OPPOSED TO IT...
GERONIMO -- I'M LOSING MY PATIENCE WITH THIS ONE'S MOUTH...

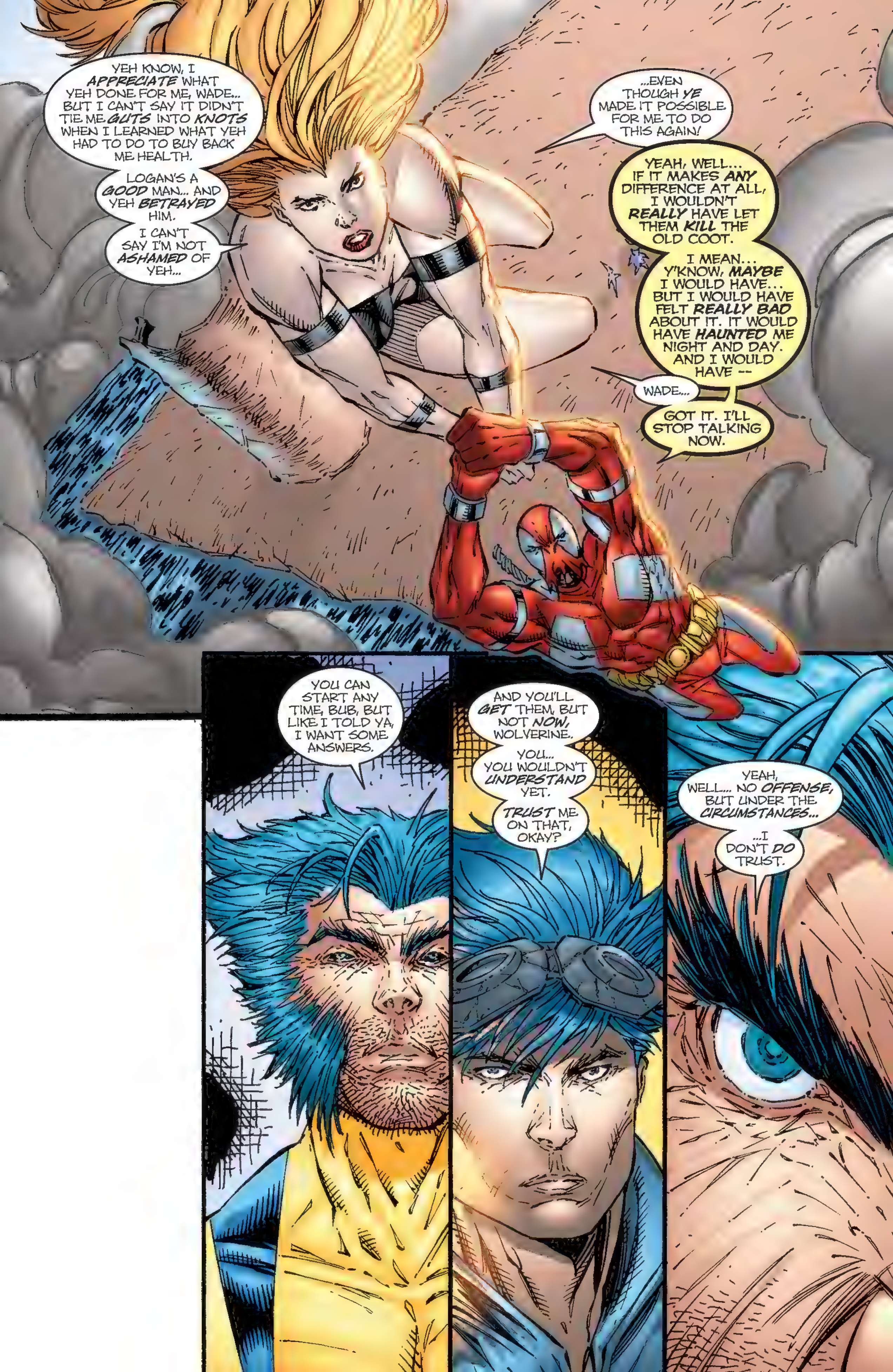

OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH OF *THIS.*
TALKING THIS THROUGH SEEMED LIKE A ***SWELL*** IDEA AT FIRST, BUT I DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR ALL YOUR SELF-RIGHTEOUS GARBAGE!
PDMF
PDMF
THERE'S *ONE* THING WE AGREE ON, THEN.
YOU SHOULD LEARN TO CURB YOUR TONGUE.
MIGHT MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED.
WHRACK
THERESA... *SIRYN!*
KRESSH
W-WADE?
WADE, I CAN SPEAK... I CAN...

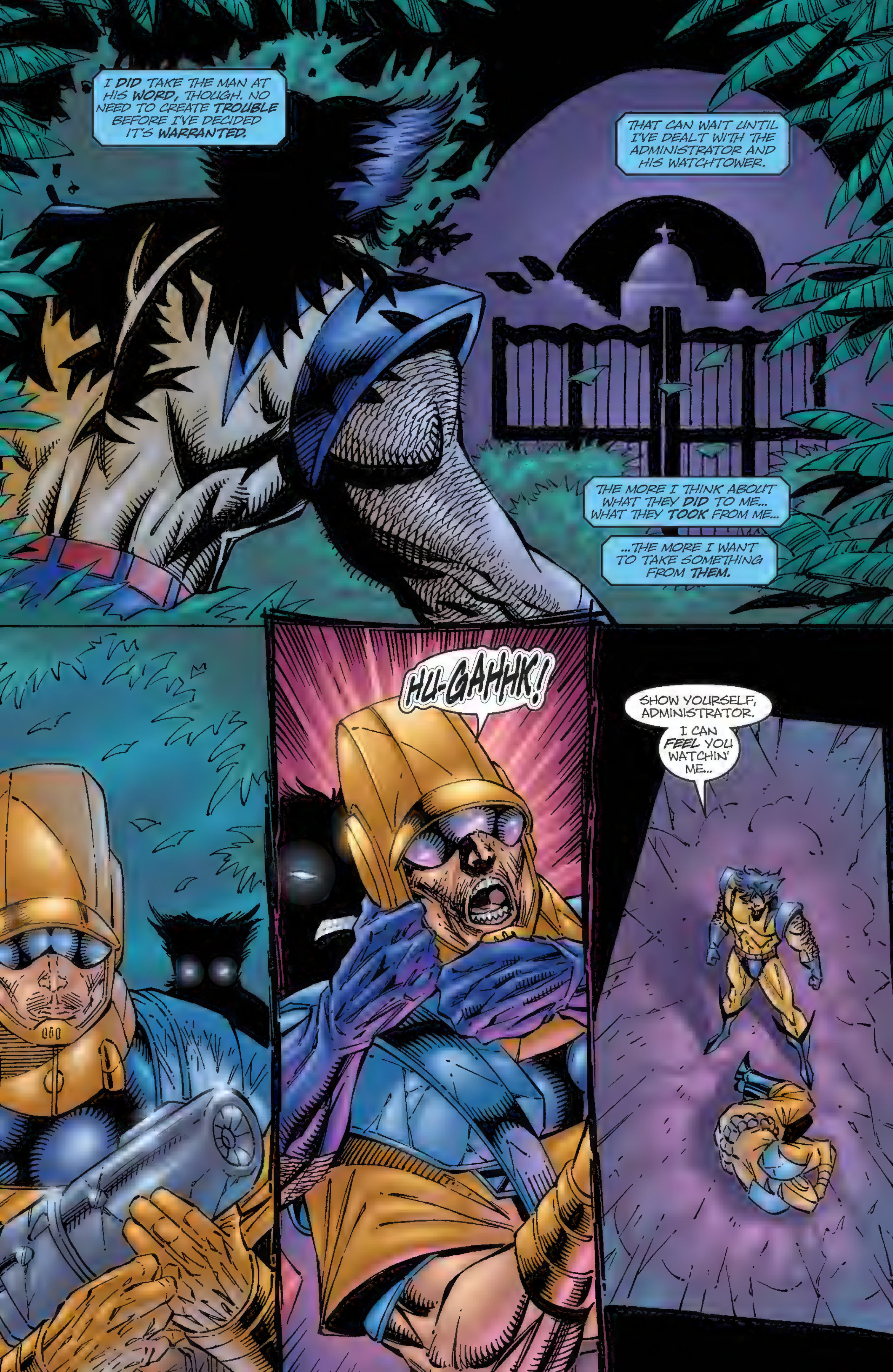

EEEEEEEEEEEE
WHAT TH --?!
IS THIS NORMAL BEHAVIOR FOR THIS ONE?
HER VOICE IS SO... SHRILL..!
YEAH, BUT THE FACT THAT YOU'RE EVEN HEARIN' HER VOICE IS SOMETHING OF A MINOR MIRACLE.
SIRYN LOST HER *SONIC SCREAM* DURING A RUN-IN WITH A GROUP CALLED THE NEW HELLIONS...⊗
...HER THROAT WAS SLASHED AND HER VOCAL CORDS *SEVERED.* BUT NOW...
ALL APPEARANCES INDICATE THAT HER INJURIES HAVE BEEN HEALED.
YEAH, WELL... THAT WAS THE *PLAN.* IT'S NOT LIKE I JUST THREW IN WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR AND HIS GANG JUST BECAUSE IT SOUNDED LIKE A FUN RIDE --!
⊗ As Detailed in X-FORCE #91

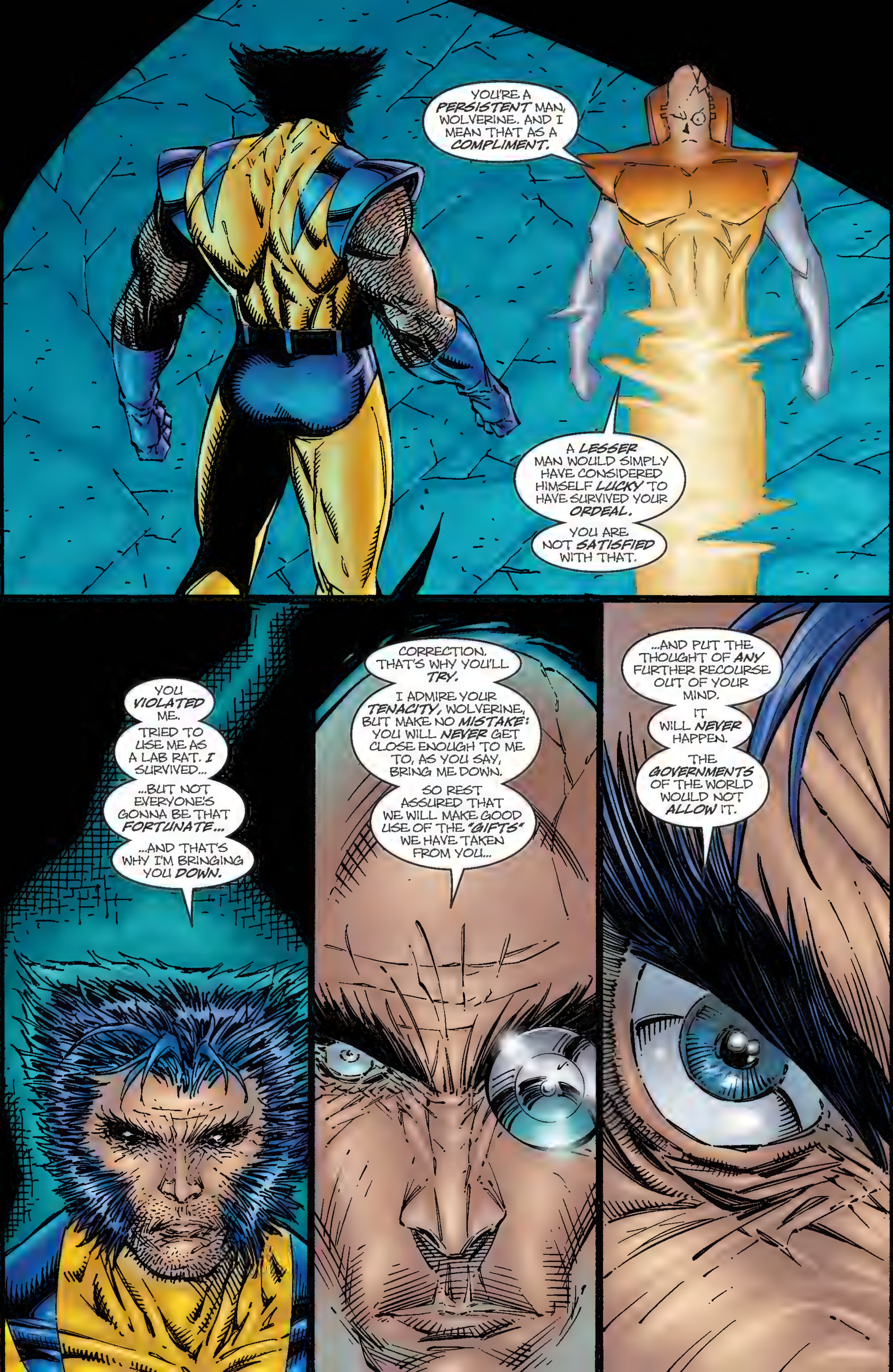

WADE... ARE YEH SAYIN' YEH'RE THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FER THIS? THAT YEH'RE THE ONE WHO DID ALL THIS TO ME?
WELL, UM... I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING DIRECTLY. I MEAN, I DID, BUT NOT TO YOU.
THAT WAS, WELL... THAT WAS... UM... EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF ANSWER ARE YOU LOOKING FOR HERE?
WADE, I'M NOT ANGRY WITH YEH... I'M JUST LOOKIN' FER SOME KIND OF EXPLANATION.
IF YEH DID THIS, 'TIS A WONDERFUL THING. WHATEVER RISKS YEH TOOK... WHATEVER SACRIFICES YEH MADE...
I CAN'T BEGIN TO EXPLAIN HOW IT FEELS TO HAVE ME VOICE BACK... HOW IT FEELS TO BE WHOLE AGAIN...!
I THINK I'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA...
...BUT BEFORE YOU START SINGING MY PRAISES TOO LOUDLY, YOU SHOULD PROBABLY HEAR HOW THIS ALL CAME ABOUT.
INTERESTING STORY, BUT THE "FEEL GOOD HIT OF THE YEAR" IT AIN'T.

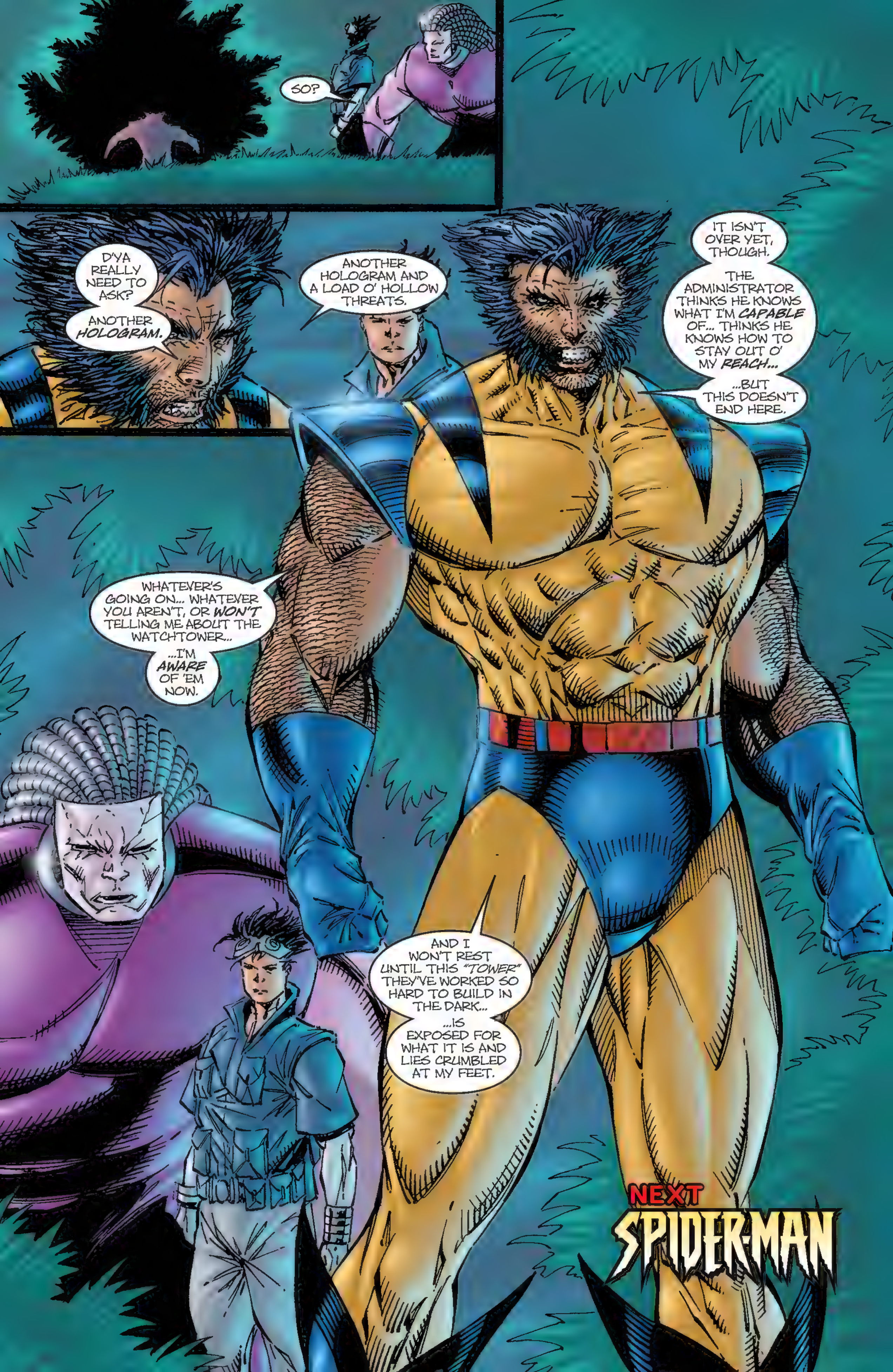

WHATEVER YEH'VE DONE, WADE... IT CAN'T BE AS BAD AS YEH'RE MAKIN' OUT...!
I WOULDN'T BET ON THAT, THERESA.
WOLVERINE...?
YUP. THE FOLKS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR RECOVERY PUT OUT A HIT ON YOURS TRULY -- -- AN' WILSON'S THE ONE WHO AGREED TO CARRY IT OUT.
AND I'M ONLY NOW BEGINNIN' TO REALIZE THAT YOUR VOICE WAS RESTORED *BECAUSE* O' THAT.
I'M NOT SURE I *FOLLOW* YEH, WOLVERINE.
HOW WOULD YOU POSSIBLY --
THE CREEPS THAT *RUN* THIS JOINT -- THEY CALL THEMSELVES *THE WATCHTOWER* -- WERE TAKIN' MY *BLOOD* SO THEY COULD TRY AN' REPLICATE MY *HEALING FACTOR.*
FIGURED THEY COULD HEAL THE WORLD OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
CAN'T HAVE BEEN *THAT* BAD AN IDEA -- THERE *IS* PLENTY WRONG WITH THE WORLD.
YOU'RE *WRONG,* DEADPOOL.
I'M NOT GOING TO STAND HERE AND SAY THAT IT'S A *BAD* THING THIS WOMAN HAS BEEN *HEALED,* OR THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE BEST *INTENTIONS* IN ALL THIS...
...BUT THERE'S NO QUESTIONING THE SHEER *WRONG-HEADEDNESS* OF ENTERING INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH *THE WATCHTOWER.*
I'VE GOT NO QUARREL WITH YOU, THOUGH -- IT'S *THE ADMINISTRATOR* I WANT.

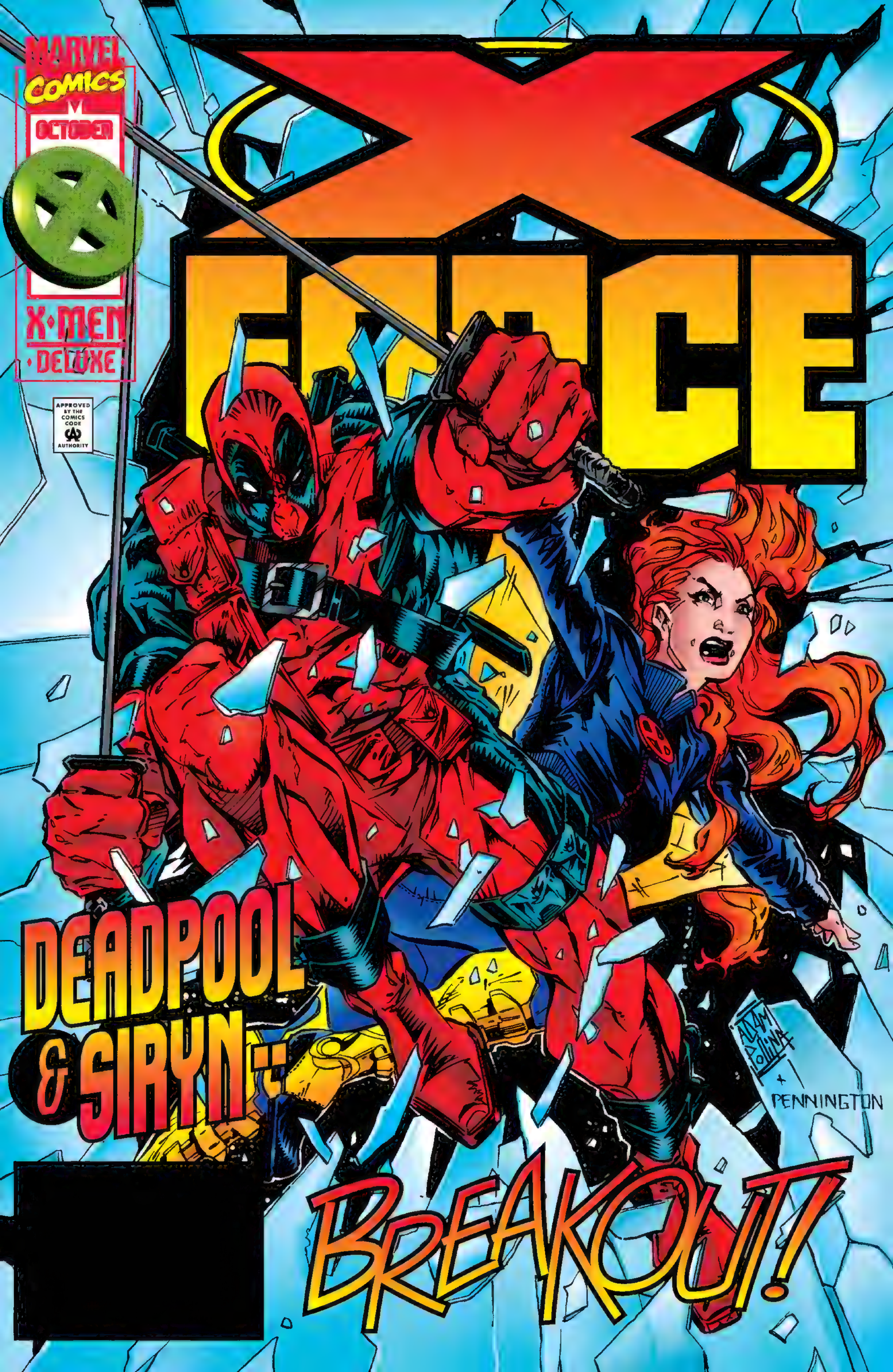

AND HOW ARE YEH FEELIN' ABOUT THIS, WOLVERINE?
IF THERE'S A FEUD BREWIN' BETWEEN YEH AND WADE... I'LL CHOOSE TO STAND *BESIDE* 'IM.
YOU'D BE MAKIN' A *POOR CHOICE*, DARLIN'... BUT I'M WITH *CROWE* ON THIS.
THE WATCHTOWER'S THE *REAL* ENEMY HERE.
GOOD, THEN LET'S GO GET 'EM.
MY GROUP AND I HAVE BEEN TRACKING DOWN AS MANY OF THE WATCHTOWER'S SAFEHOUSES AS POSSIBLE IN OUR SEARCH FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR.
WE HAVE ANOTHER SITE IN MIND, IF YOU WANT A PIECE OF THE ACTION...
WELL, I THINK YOU CAN COUNT *ME* OUT. I, UH... HAVE TO GET THE YOUNG LADY *HOME* AND ALL THAT.
I'M IN, THOUGH.
BUT FIRST... I WANT YOU TO SET ME STRAIGHT ON WHAT'S BEEN GOING DOWN BETWEEN *YOU* AND *THE WATCHTOWER*.
AND I DON'T CARE IF IT'S A LONGER STORY THAN THE HISTORY O' THE WHOLE FLAMIN' WORLD...
...I WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU CALL THE ADMINISTRATOR *"FATHER."*

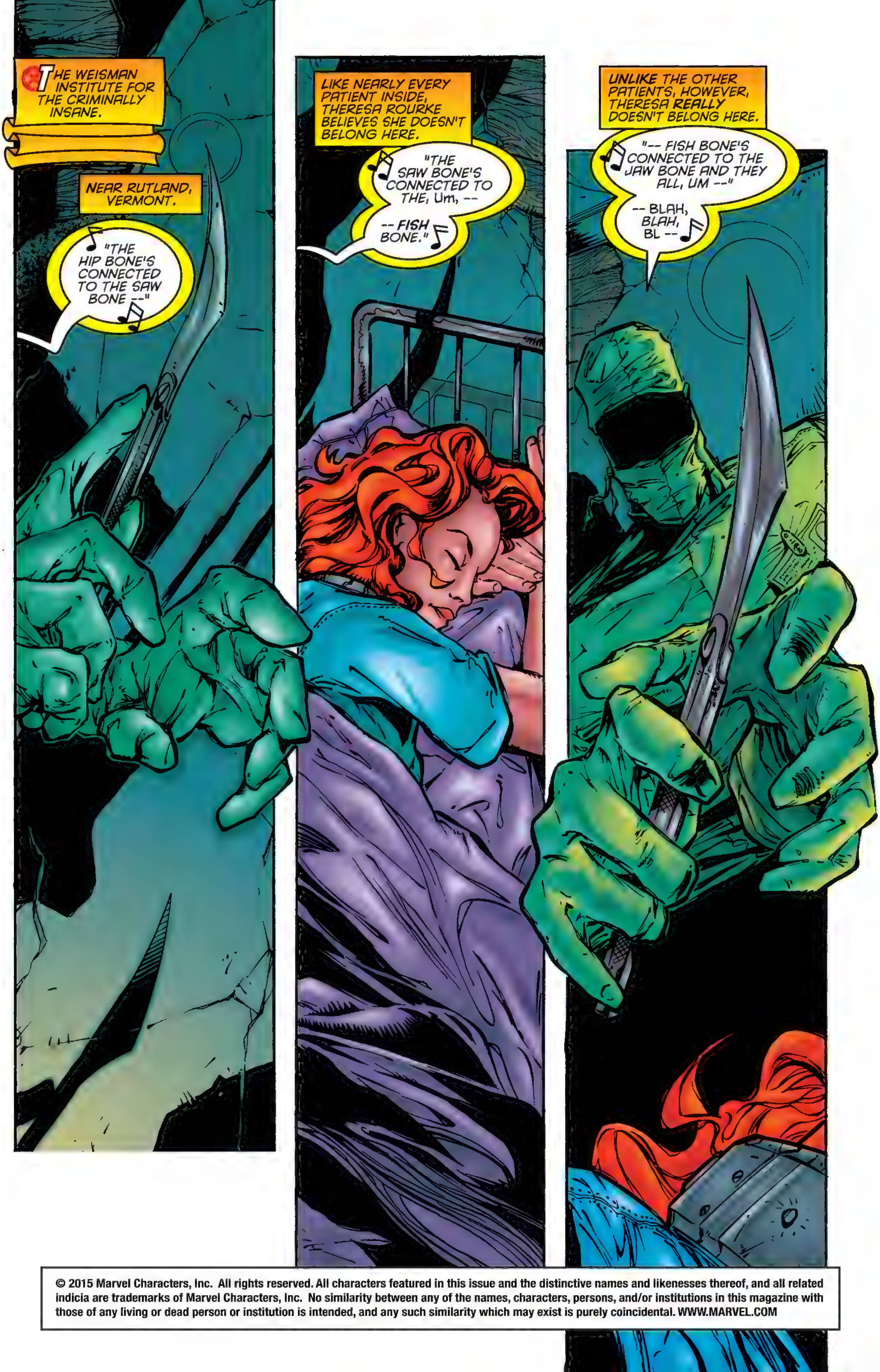

YEH KNOW, I *APPRECIATE* WHAT YEH DONE FOR ME, WADE... BUT I CAN'T SAY IT DIDN'T TIE ME *GUTS* INTO *KNOTS* WHEN I LEARNED WHAT YEH HAD TO DO TO BUY BACK ME HEALTH.
LOGAN'S A *GOOD* MAN... AND YEH *BETRAYED* HIM.
I CAN'T SAY I'M NOT *ASHAMED* OF YEH...
...EVEN THOUGH *YE* MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO DO THIS AGAIN!
YEAH, WELL... IF IT MAKES *ANY* DIFFERENCE AT ALL, I WOULDN'T *REALLY* HAVE LET THEM *KILL* THE OLD COOT.
I MEAN... Y'KNOW, *MAYBE* I WOULD HAVE... BUT I WOULD HAVE FELT *REALLY BAD* ABOUT IT. IT WOULD HAVE *HAUNTED* ME NIGHT AND DAY. AND I WOULD HAVE --
WADE...
GOT IT. I'LL STOP TALKING NOW.
YOU CAN START ANY TIME, BUB, BUT LIKE I TOLD YA, I WANT SOME ANSWERS.
AND YOU'LL *GET* THEM, BUT NOT *NOW*, WOLVERINE.
YOU... YOU WOULDN'T *UNDERSTAND* YET.
TRUST ME ON THAT, OKAY?
YEAH, WELL... NO *OFFENSE*, BUT UNDER THE *CIRCUMSTANCES*...
...I DON'T *DO* TRUST.


I DID TAKE THE MAN AT HIS WORD, THOUGH. NO NEED TO CREATE TROUBLE BEFORE I'VE DECIDED IT'S WARRANTED.
THAT CAN WAIT UNTIL I'VE DEALT WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR AND HIS WATCHTOWER.
THE MORE I THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY DID TO ME... WHAT THEY TOOK FROM ME...
...THE MORE I WANT TO TAKE SOMETHING FROM THEM.
HU-GAHHK!
SHOW YOURSELF, ADMINISTRATOR.
I CAN FEEL YOU WATCHIN' ME...


YOU'RE A *PERSISTENT* MAN, WOLVERINE. AND I MEAN THAT AS A *COMPLIMENT.*
A *LESSER* MAN WOULD SIMPLY HAVE CONSIDERED HIMSELF *LUCKY* TO HAVE SURVIVED YOUR *ORDEAL.*
YOU ARE NOT *SATISFIED* WITH THAT.
YOU *VIOLATED* ME.
TRIED TO USE ME AS A LAB RAT. *I* SURVIVED...
...BUT NOT EVERYONE'S GONNA BE THAT *FORTUNATE...*
...AND THAT'S WHY I'M BRINGING YOU *DOWN.*
CORRECTION. THAT'S WHY YOU'LL *TRY.*
I ADMIRE YOUR *TENACITY,* WOLVERINE, BUT MAKE NO *MISTAKE:* YOU WILL *NEVER* GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO ME TO, AS YOU SAY, BRING ME DOWN.
SO REST ASSURED THAT WE WILL MAKE GOOD USE OF THE *"GIFTS"* WE HAVE TAKEN FROM YOU...
...AND PUT THE THOUGHT OF *ANY* FURTHER RECOURSE OUT OF YOUR MIND.
IT WILL *NEVER* HAPPEN.
THE *GOVERNMENTS* OF THE WORLD WOULD NOT *ALLOW* IT.


SO?
D'YA REALLY NEED TO ASK?
ANOTHER *HOLOGRAM.*
ANOTHER HOLOGRAM AND A LOAD O' HOLLOW THREATS.
IT ISN'T OVER YET, THOUGH.
THE ADMINISTRATOR THINKS HE KNOWS WHAT I'M *CAPABLE* OF... THINKS HE KNOWS HOW TO STAY OUT O' MY *REACH...*
...BUT THIS DOESN'T END HERE.
WHATEVER'S GOING ON... WHATEVER YOU AREN'T, OR *WON'T* TELLING ME ABOUT THE WATCHTOWER...
...I'M *AWARE* OF 'EM NOW.
AND I WON'T REST UNTIL THIS *"TOWER"* THEY'VE WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD IN THE DARK...
...IS EXPOSED FOR WHAT IT IS AND LIES CRUMBLED AT MY FEET.
NEXT
SPIDER-MAN


MARVEL COMICS
OCTOBER
X-MEN DELUXE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
X-FORCE
DEADPOOL & SIRYN:
BREAKOUT!
ADAM POLLINA + PENNINGTON


THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE.
NEAR RUTLAND, VERMONT.
"THE HIP BONE'S CONNECTED TO THE SAW BONE --"
LIKE NEARLY EVERY PATIENT INSIDE, THERESA ROURKE BELIEVES SHE DOESN'T BELONG HERE.
"THE SAW BONE'S CONNECTED TO THE, Um, --
-- FISH BONE."
UNLIKE THE OTHER PATIENTS, HOWEVER, THERESA REALLY DOESN'T BELONG HERE.
"-- FISH BONE'S CONNECTED TO THE JAW BONE AND THEY ALL, UM --"
-- BLAH, BLAH, BL --

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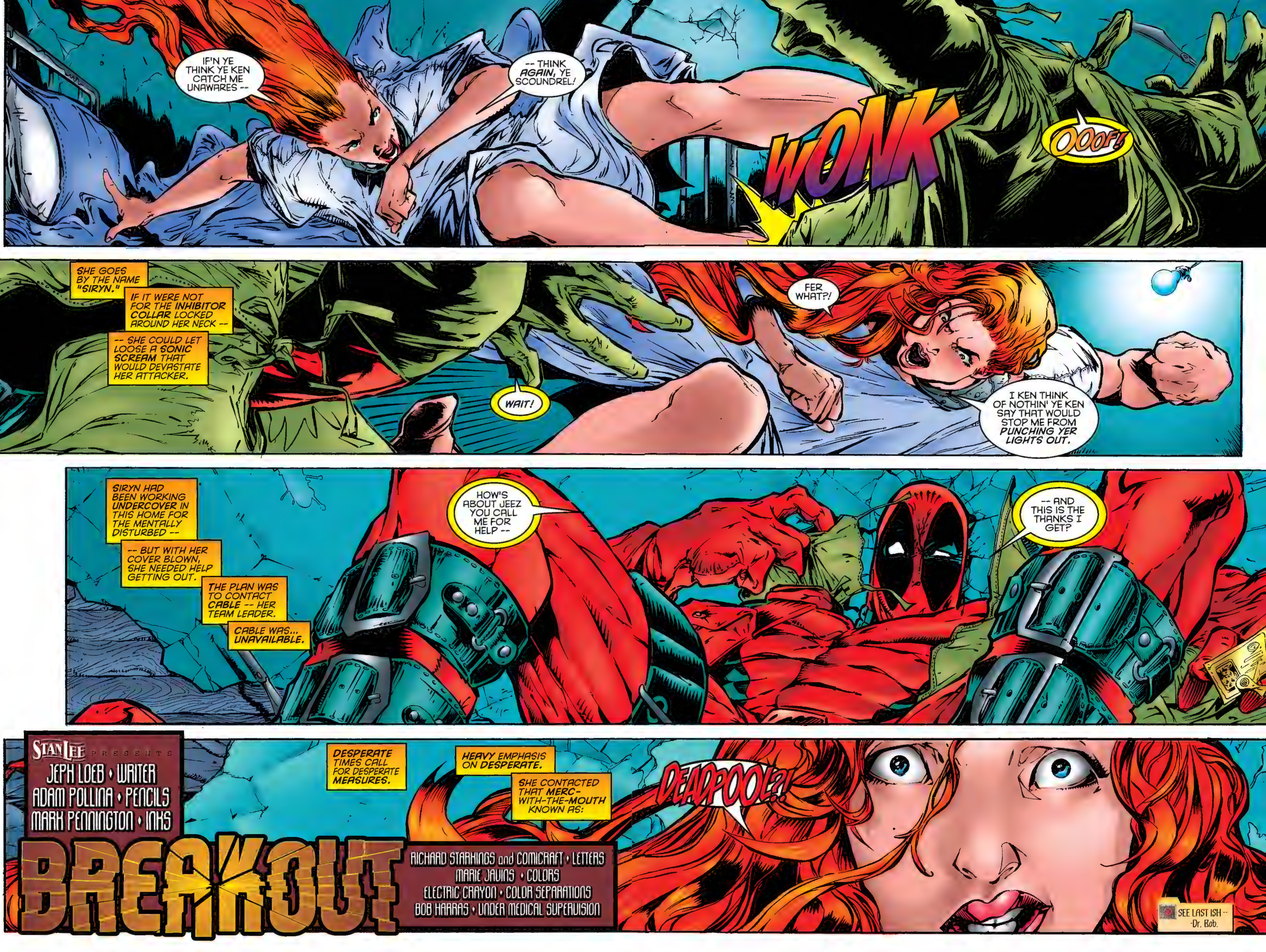
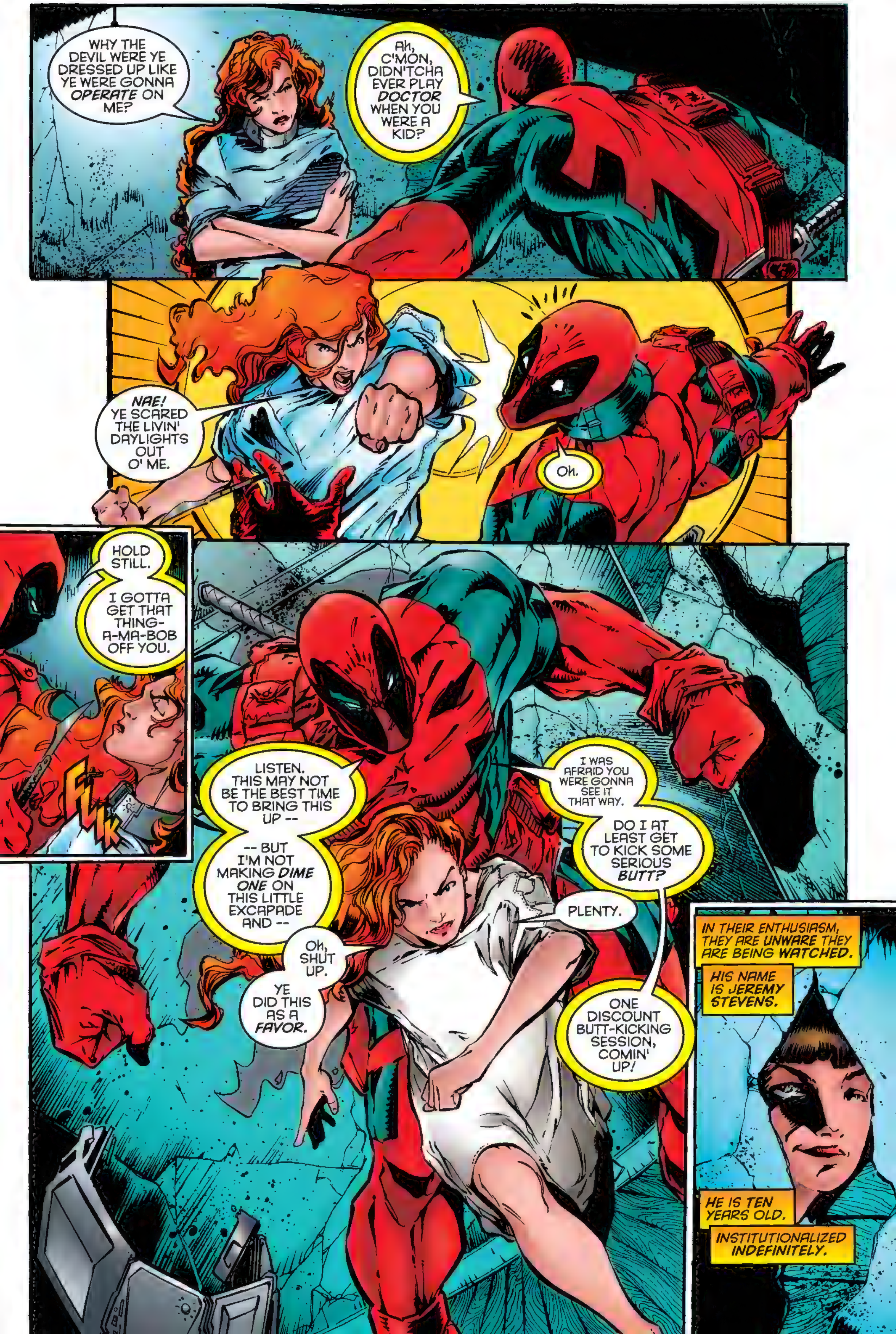
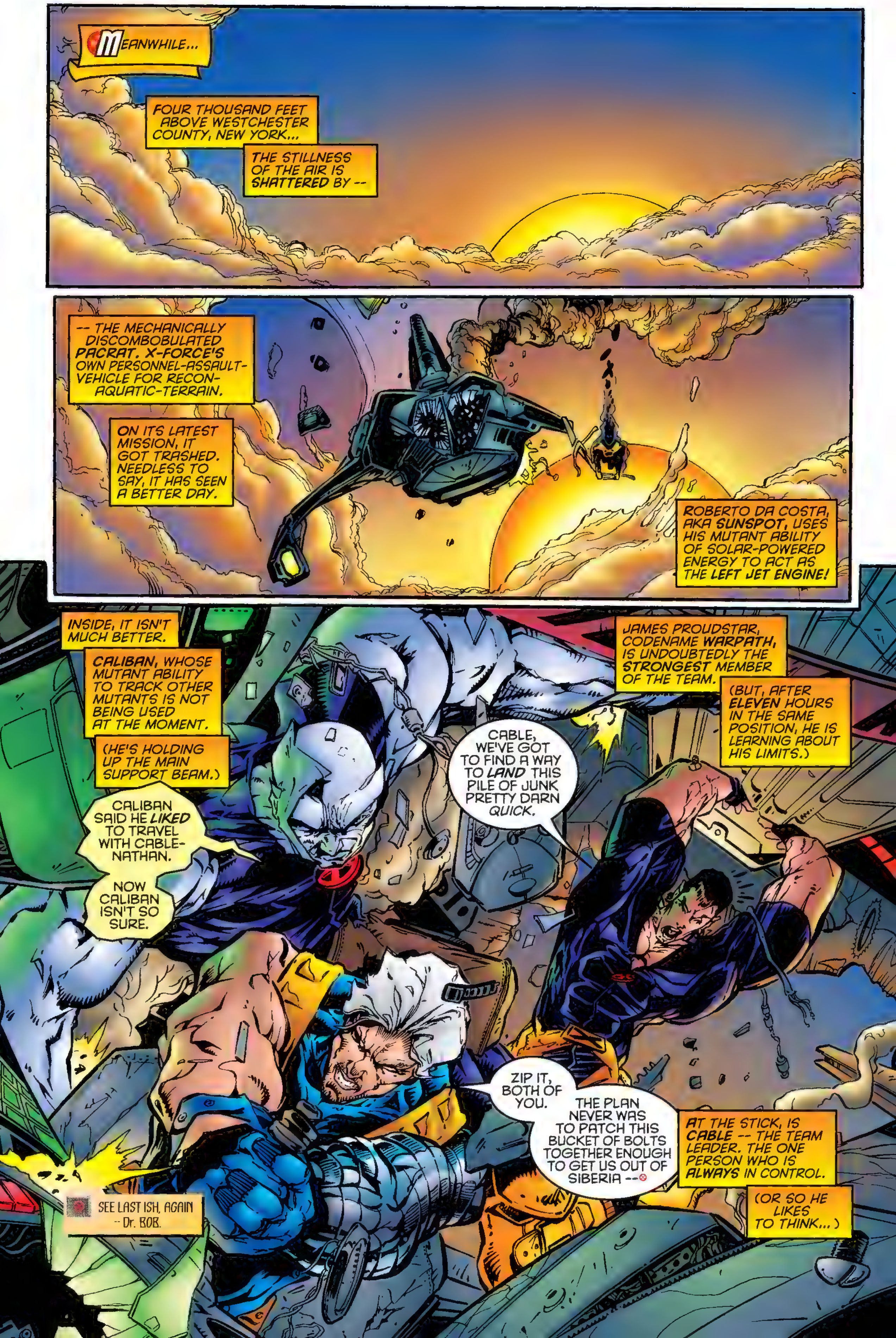
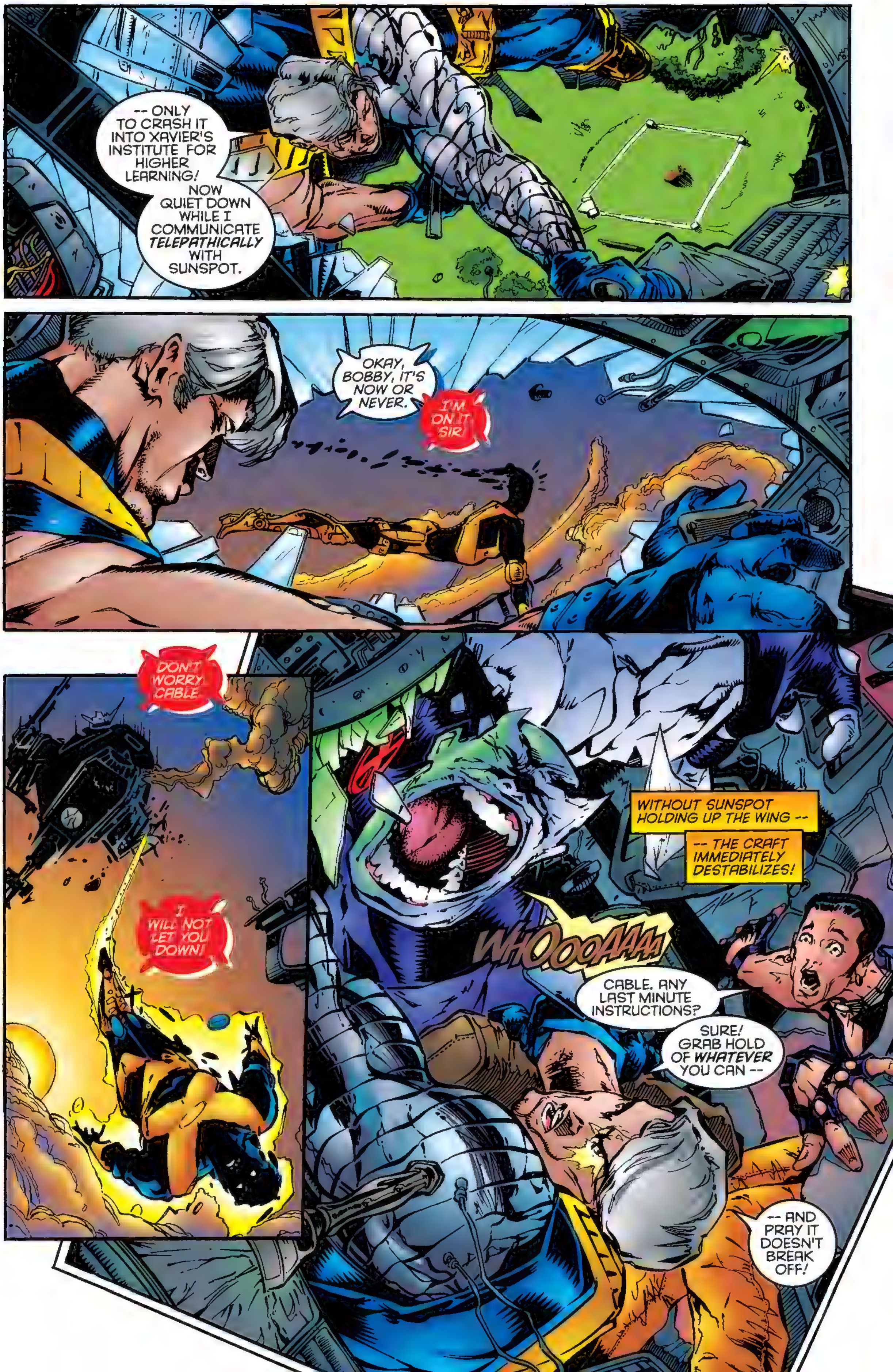

IF'N YE THINK YE KEN CATCH ME UNAWARES --
-- THINK *AGAIN*, YE SCOUNDREL!
WONK
OOOF!
SHE GOES BY THE NAME *"SIRYN."*
IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE **INHIBITOR COLLAR** LOCKED AROUND HER NECK --
-- SHE COULD LET LOOSE A **SONIC SCREAM** THAT WOULD DEVASTATE HER ATTACKER.
WAIT!
FER WHAT?!
I KEN THINK OF NOTHIN' YE KEN SAY THAT WOULD STOP ME FROM *PUNCHING YER LIGHTS OUT.*
SIRYN HAD BEEN WORKING **UNDERCOVER** IN THIS HOME FOR THE MENTALLY DISTURBED --
-- BUT WITH HER COVER BLOWN, SHE NEEDED HELP GETTING OUT.
THE PLAN WAS TO CONTACT **CABLE** -- HER TEAM LEADER.
CABLE WAS... **UNAVAILABLE.**
HOW'S ABOUT JEEZ YOU CALL ME FOR HELP --
-- AND THIS IS THE THANKS I GET?
DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE **MEASURES.**
HEAVY EMPHASIS ON **DESPERATE.**
SHE CONTACTED THAT **MERC-WITH-THE-MOUTH** KNOWN AS:
DEADPOOL?!
SEE LAST ISH -- -Dr. Bob.

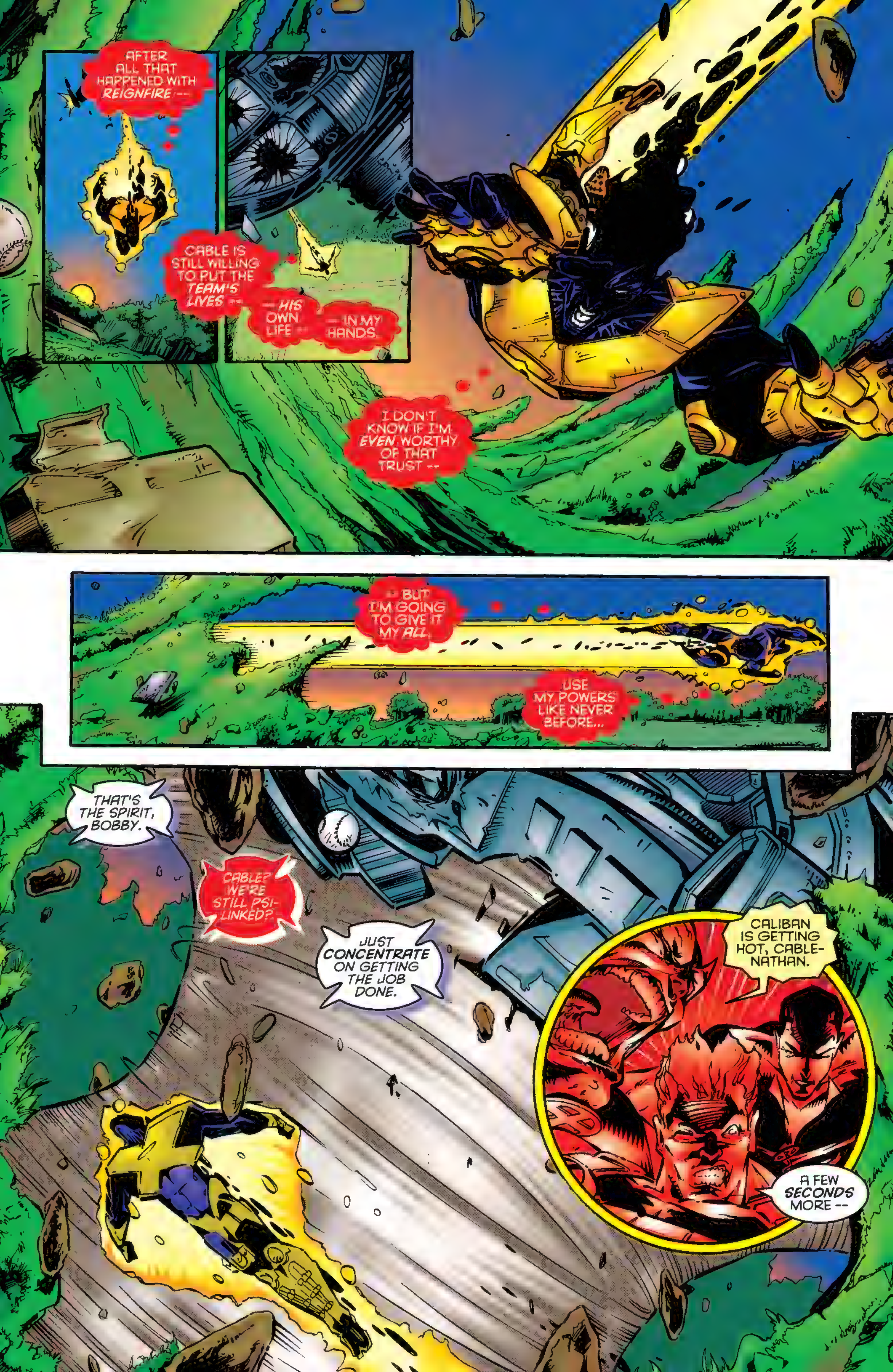
BREAKOUT

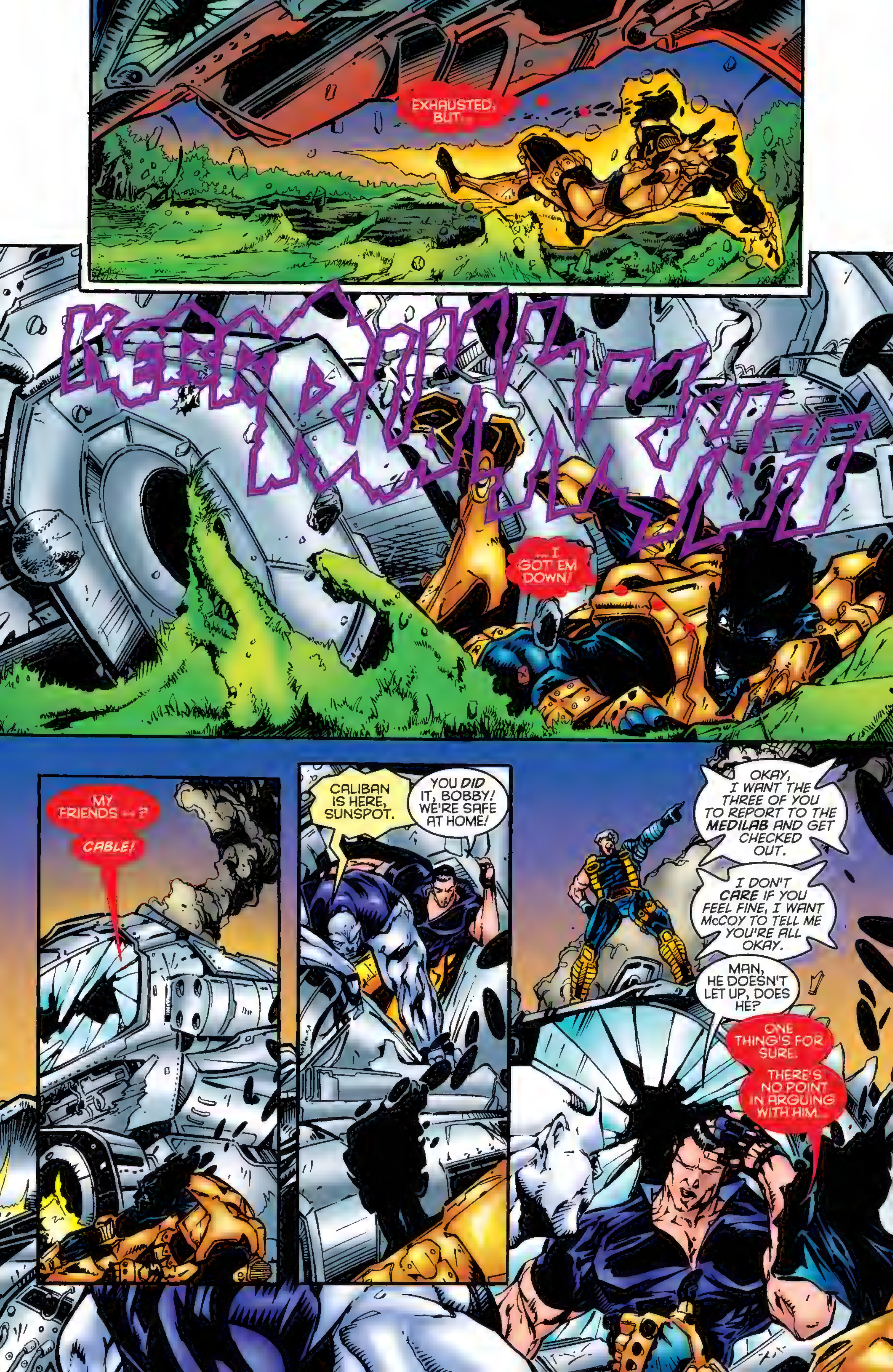
STAN LEE PRESENTS
JEPH LOEB • WRITER
ADAM POLLINA • PENCILS
MARK PENNINGTON • INKS
RICHARD STARKINGS and COMICRAFT • LETTERS
MARIE JAVINS • COLORS
ELECTRIC CRAYON • COLOR SEPARATIONS
BOB HARRAS • UNDER MEDICAL SUPERVISION

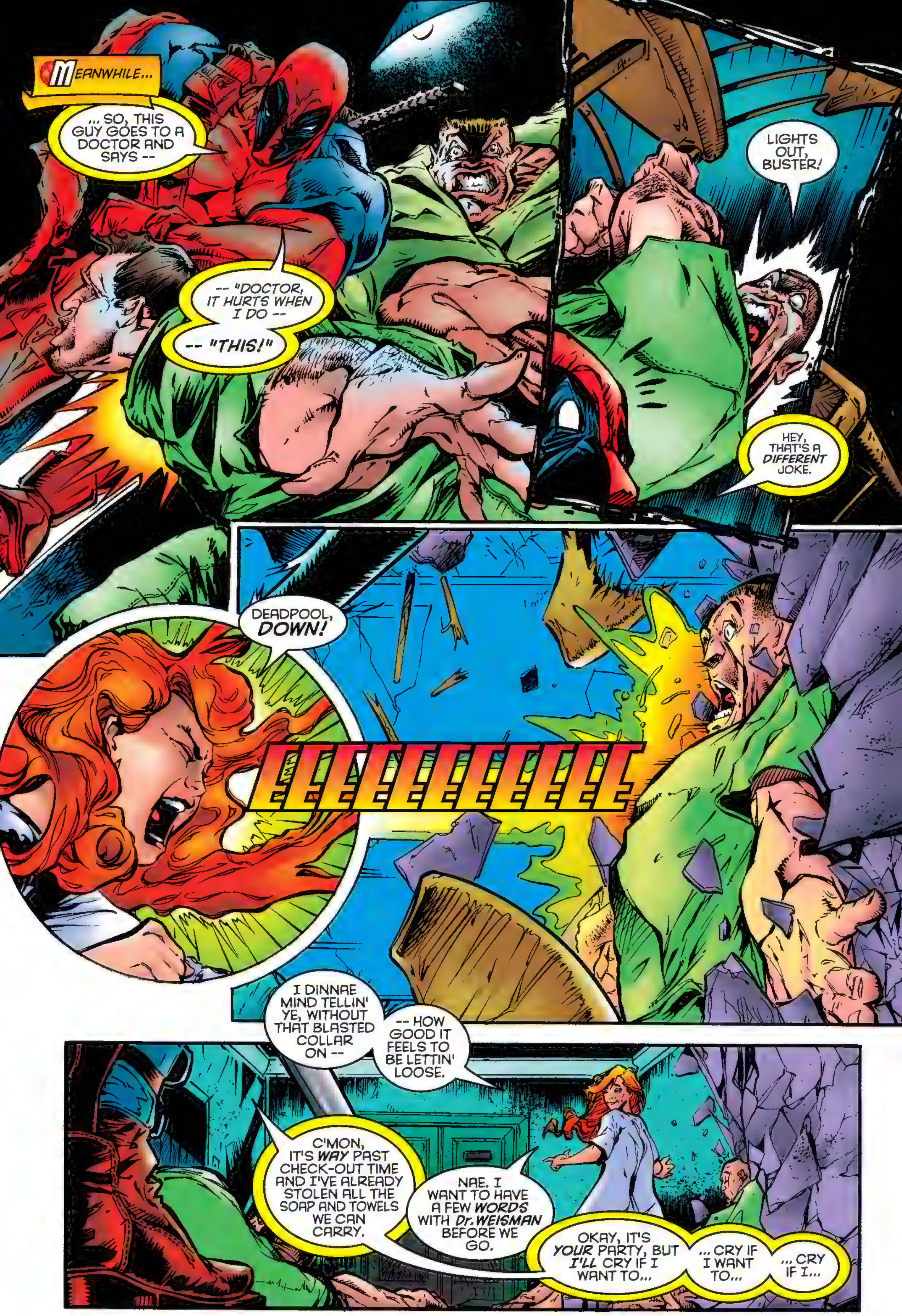

WHY THE DEVIL WERE YE DRESSED UP LIKE YE WERE GONNA *OPERATE* ON ME?
AH, C'MON, DIDN'TCHA EVER PLAY *DOCTOR* WHEN YOU WERE A KID?
NAE! YE SCARED THE LIVIN' DAYLIGHTS OUT O' ME.
OH.
HOLD STILL.
I GOTTA GET THAT THING-A-MA-BOB OFF YOU.
FLIK
LISTEN. THIS MAY NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO BRING THIS UP --
-- BUT I'M NOT MAKING *DIME ONE* ON THIS LITTLE EXCAPADE AND --
OH, SHUT UP.
YE DID THIS AS A *FAVOR.*
I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE GONNA SEE IT THAT WAY.
DO I AT LEAST GET TO KICK SOME SERIOUS *BUTT?*
PLENTY.
ONE DISCOUNT BUTT-KICKING SESSION, COMIN' UP!
*IN THEIR ENTHUSIASM, THEY ARE UNWARE THEY ARE BEING **WATCHED.***
*HIS NAME IS **JEREMY STEVENS.***
HE IS TEN YEARS OLD.
*INSTITUTIONALIZED **INDEFINITELY.***

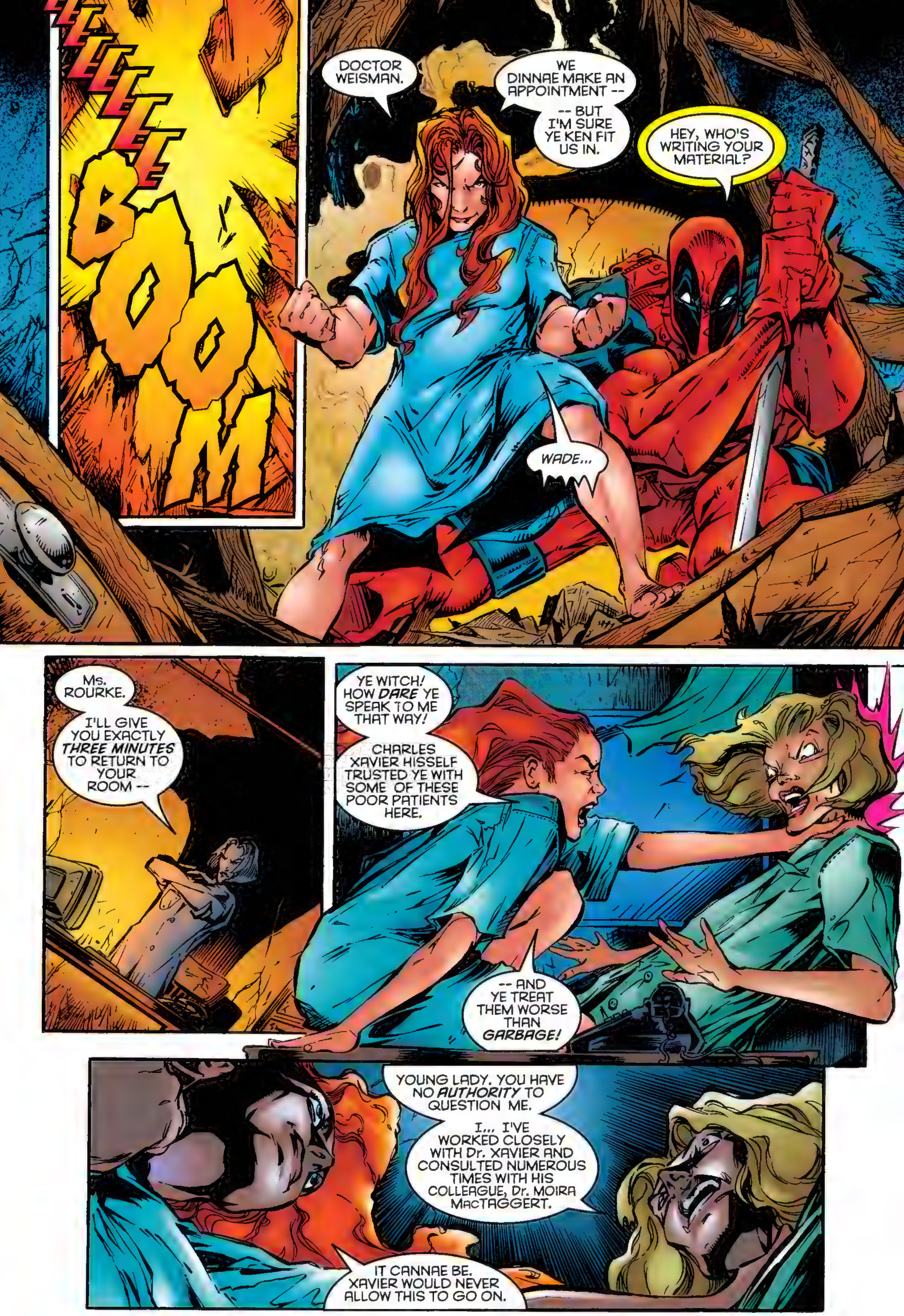

MEANWHILE...
FOUR THOUSAND FEET ABOVE WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK...
THE STILLNESS OF THE AIR IS SHATTERED BY --
-- THE MECHANICALLY DISCOMBOBULATED PACRAT. X-FORCE'S OWN PERSONNEL-ASSAULT-VEHICLE FOR RECON-AQUATIC-TERRAIN.
ON ITS LATEST MISSION, IT GOT TRASHED. NEEDLESS TO SAY, IT HAS SEEN A BETTER DAY.
ROBERTO DA COSTA, AKA SUNSPOT, USES HIS MUTANT ABILITY OF SOLAR-POWERED ENERGY TO ACT AS THE LEFT JET ENGINE!
INSIDE, IT ISN'T MUCH BETTER.
CALIBAN, WHOSE MUTANT ABILITY TO TRACK OTHER MUTANTS IS NOT BEING USED AT THE MOMENT.
(HE'S HOLDING UP THE MAIN SUPPORT BEAM.)
JAMES PROUDSTAR, CODENAME WARPATH, IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE STRONGEST MEMBER OF THE TEAM.
(BUT, AFTER ELEVEN HOURS IN THE SAME POSITION, HE IS LEARNING ABOUT HIS LIMITS.)
CALIBAN SAID HE LIKED TO TRAVEL WITH CABLE-NATHAN.
NOW CALIBAN ISN'T SO SURE.
CABLE, WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO LAND THIS PILE OF JUNK PRETTY DARN QUICK.
ZIP IT, BOTH OF YOU.
THE PLAN NEVER WAS TO PATCH THIS BUCKET OF BOLTS TOGETHER ENOUGH TO GET US OUT OF SIBERIA --
AT THE STICK, IS CABLE -- THE TEAM LEADER. THE ONE PERSON WHO IS ALWAYS IN CONTROL.
(OR SO HE LIKES TO THINK...)
SEE LAST ISH, AGAIN -- Dr. BOB.

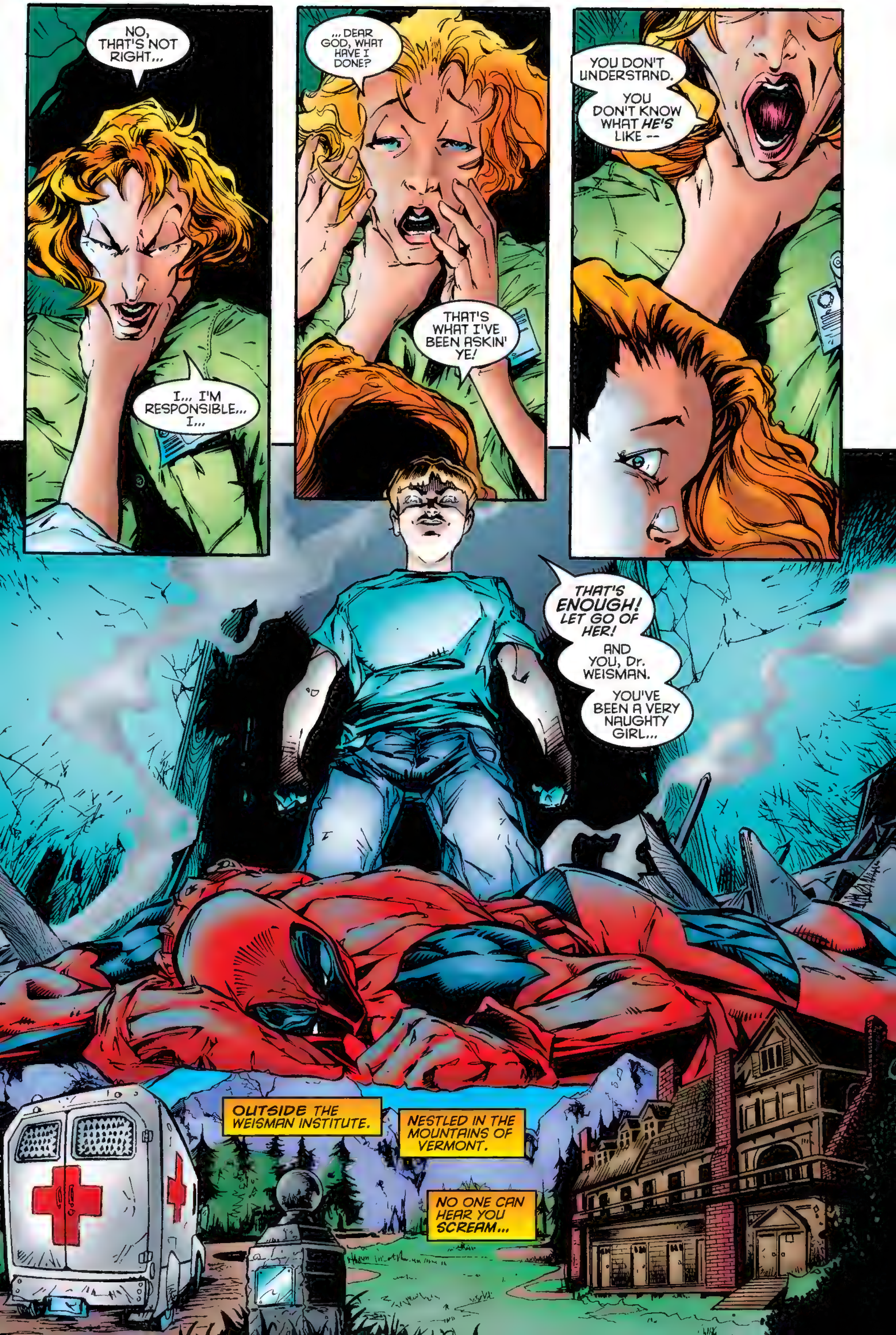

-- ONLY TO CRASH IT INTO XAVIER'S INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING!
NOW QUIET DOWN WHILE I COMMUNICATE *TELEPATHICALLY* WITH SUNSPOT.
OKAY, BOBBY, IT'S NOW OR NEVER.
I'M ON IT SIR!
DON'T WORRY CABLE
I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN!
WITHOUT SUNSPOT HOLDING UP THE WING --
-- THE CRAFT IMMEDIATELY DESTABILIZES!
WHOOOAAAA
CABLE, ANY LAST MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS?
SURE! GRAB HOLD OF *WHATEVER* YOU CAN --
-- AND PRAY IT DOESN'T BREAK OFF!

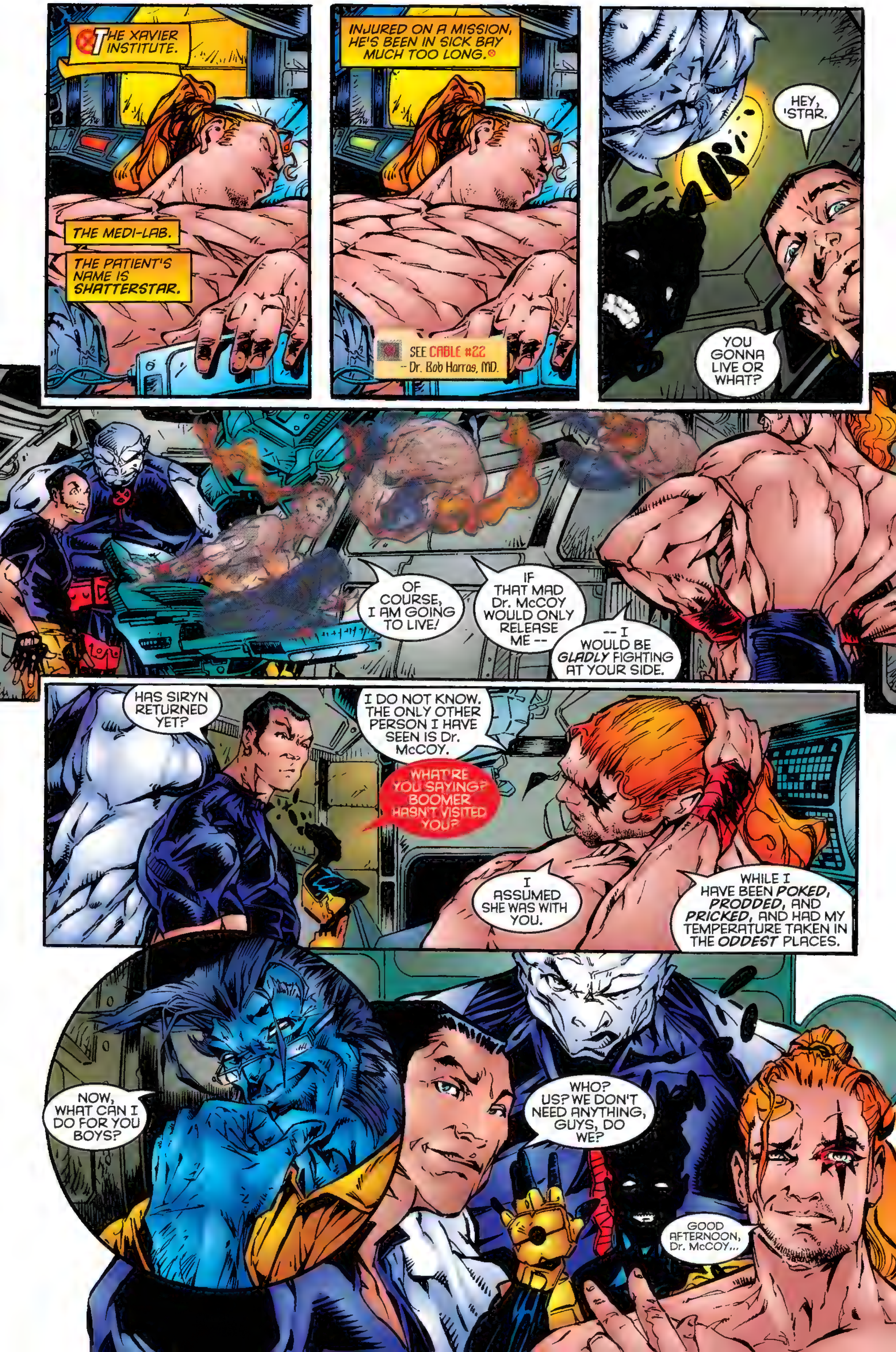

AFTER ALL THAT HAPPENED WITH *REIGNFIRE* --
CABLE IS STILL WILLING TO PUT THE *TEAM'S LIVES* --
-- *HIS* OWN LIFE --
-- IN MY HANDS.
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M *EVEN* WORTHY OF THAT TRUST --
-- BUT I'M GOING TO GIVE IT MY *ALL*.
USE MY POWERS LIKE NEVER BEFORE...
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, BOBBY.
CABLE? WE'RE STILL PSI-LINKED?
JUST *CONCENTRATE* ON GETTING THE JOB DONE.
CALIBAN IS GETTING HOT, CABLE-NATHAN.
A FEW *SECONDS* MORE --

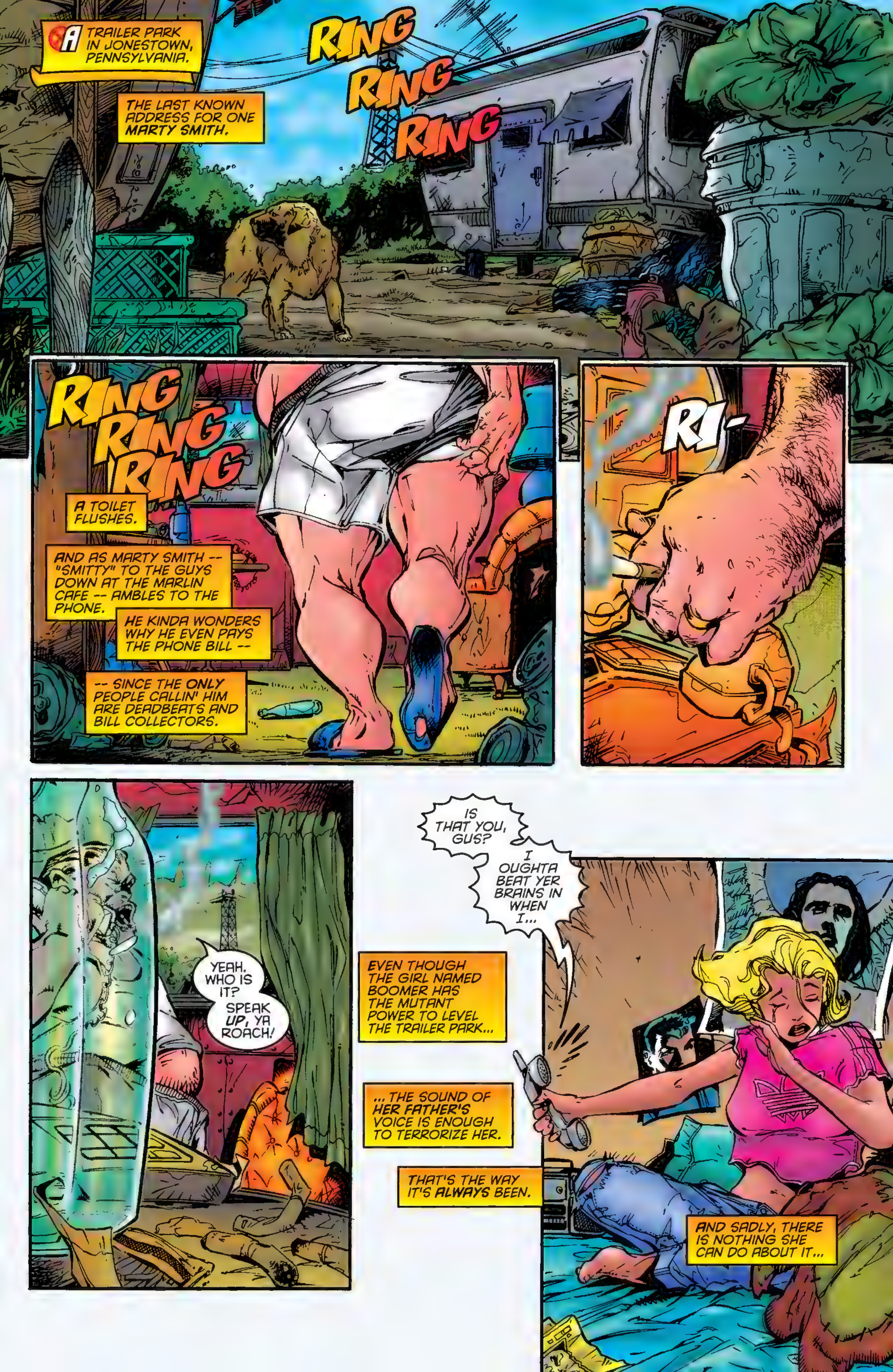

EXHAUSTED, BUT...
KRRRDOOOMMM
...I GOT 'EM DOWN!
MY FRIENDS --?
CABLE!
CALIBAN IS HERE, SUNSPOT.
YOU DID IT, BOBBY! WE'RE SAFE AT HOME!
OKAY, I WANT THE THREE OF YOU TO REPORT TO THE MEDILAB AND GET CHECKED OUT.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU FEEL FINE, I WANT McCOY TO TELL ME YOU'RE ALL OKAY.
MAN, HE DOESN'T LET UP, DOES HE?
ONE THING'S FOR SURE.
THERE'S NO POINT IN ARGUING WITH HIM...

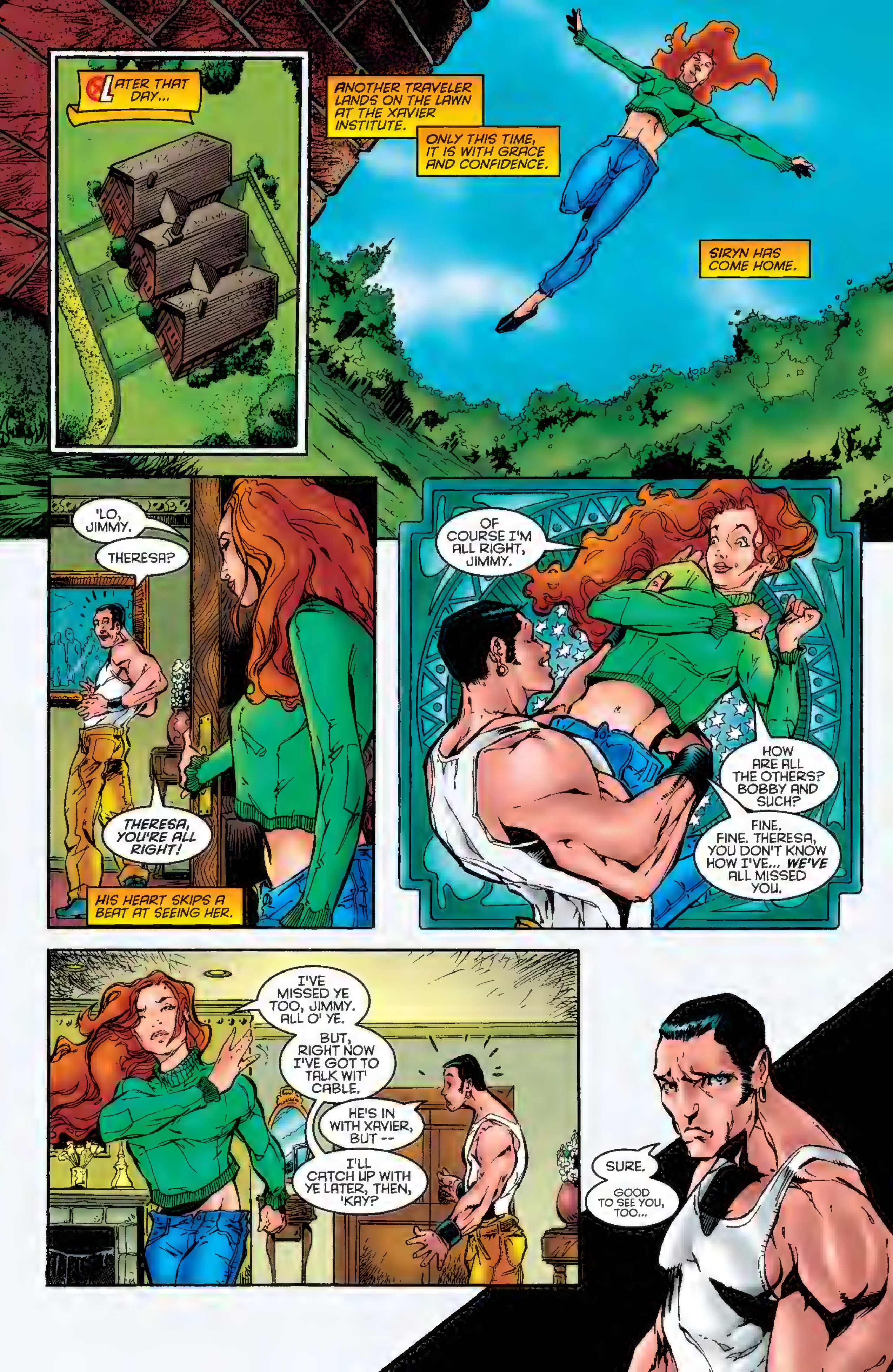

MEANWHILE...
... SO, THIS GUY GOES TO A DOCTOR AND SAYS --
-- "DOCTOR, IT HURTS WHEN I DO --
-- "THIS!"
LIGHTS OUT, BUSTER!
HEY, THAT'S A *DIFFERENT* JOKE.
DEADPOOL, *DOWN!*
EEEEEEEEEEE
I DINNAE MIND TELLIN' YE, WITHOUT THAT BLASTED COLLAR ON --
-- HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO BE LETTIN' LOOSE.
C'MON, IT'S *WAY* PAST CHECK-OUT TIME AND I'VE ALREADY STOLEN ALL THE SOAP AND TOWELS WE CAN CARRY.
NAE. I WANT TO HAVE A FEW *WORDS* WITH *Dr. WEISMAN* BEFORE WE GO.
OKAY, IT'S *YOUR* PARTY, BUT *I'LL* CRY IF I WANT TO...
... CRY IF I WANT TO...
... CRY IF I...

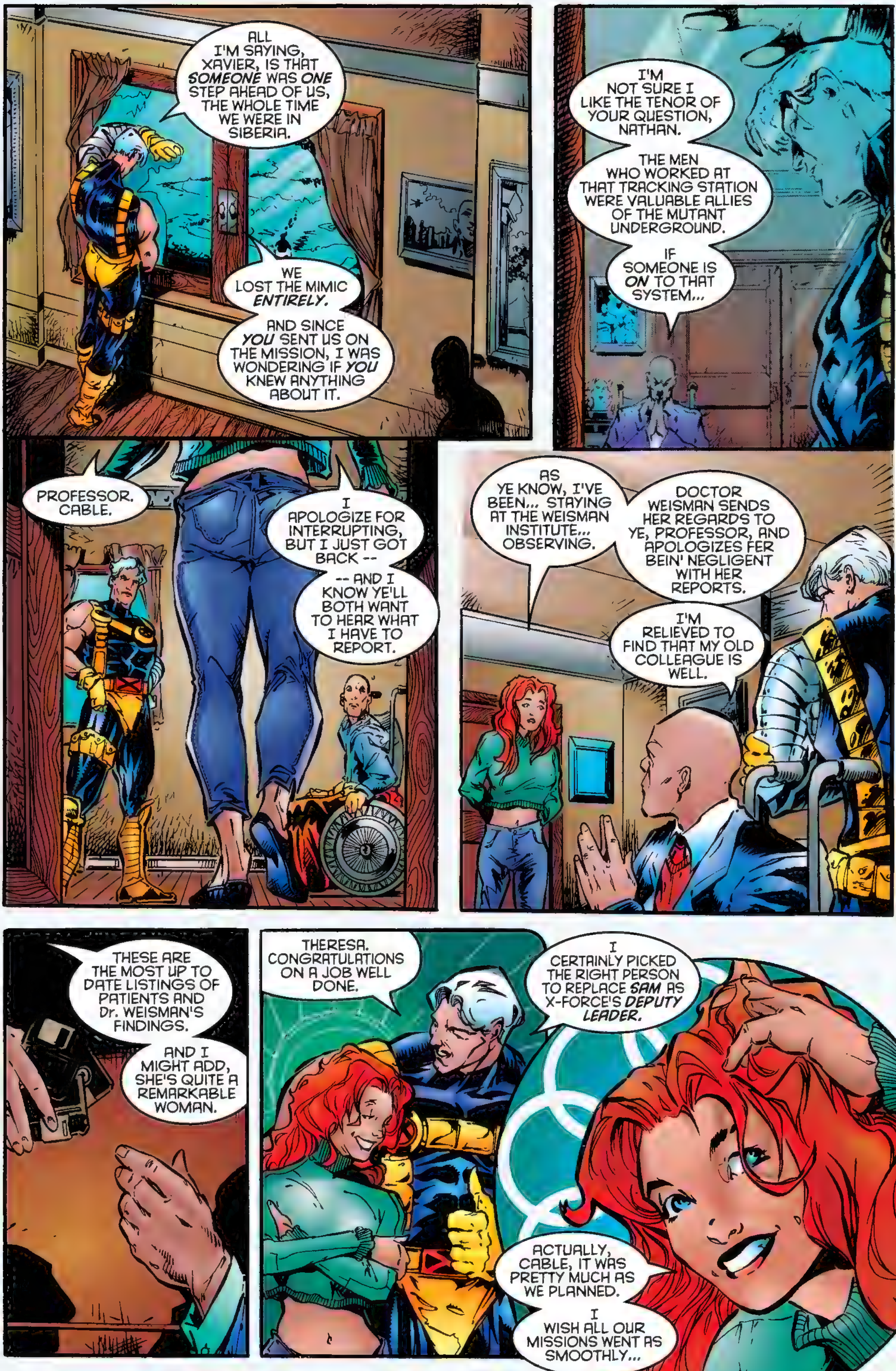

EEEEEEEBOOM
DOCTOR WEISMAN.
WE DINNAE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT --
-- BUT I'M SURE YE KEN FIT US IN.
HEY, WHO'S WRITING YOUR MATERIAL?
WADE...
Ms. ROURKE.
I'LL GIVE YOU EXACTLY *THREE MINUTES* TO RETURN TO YOUR ROOM --
YE WITCH! HOW *DARE* YE SPEAK TO ME THAT WAY!
CHARLES XAVIER HISSELF TRUSTED YE WITH SOME OF THESE POOR PATIENTS HERE.
-- AND YE TREAT THEM WORSE THAN *GARBAGE!*
YOUNG LADY, YOU HAVE NO *AUTHORITY* TO QUESTION ME.
I... I'VE WORKED CLOSELY WITH Dr. XAVIER AND CONSULTED NUMEROUS TIMES WITH HIS COLLEAGUE, Dr. MOIRA MacTAGGERT.
IT CANNAE BE. XAVIER WOULD NEVER ALLOW THIS TO GO ON.

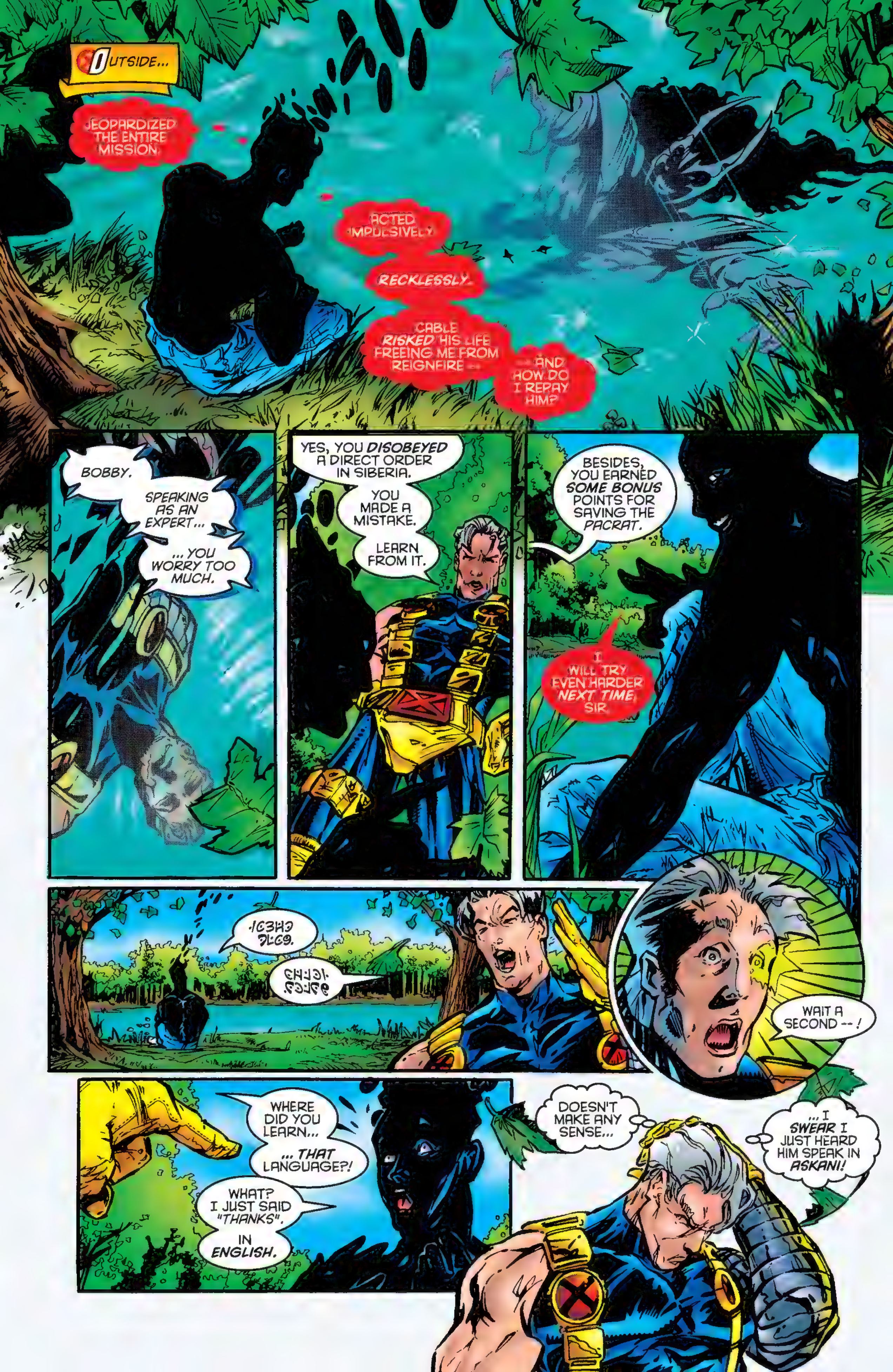

NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT...
I... I'M RESPONSIBLE... I...
... DEAR GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN ASKIN' YE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT *HE'S* LIKE --
THAT'S **ENOUGH!** LET GO OF HER!
AND YOU, Dr. WEISMAN.
YOU'VE BEEN A VERY NAUGHTY GIRL...
OUTSIDE THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE.
NESTLED IN THE MOUNTAINS OF VERMONT.
NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM...

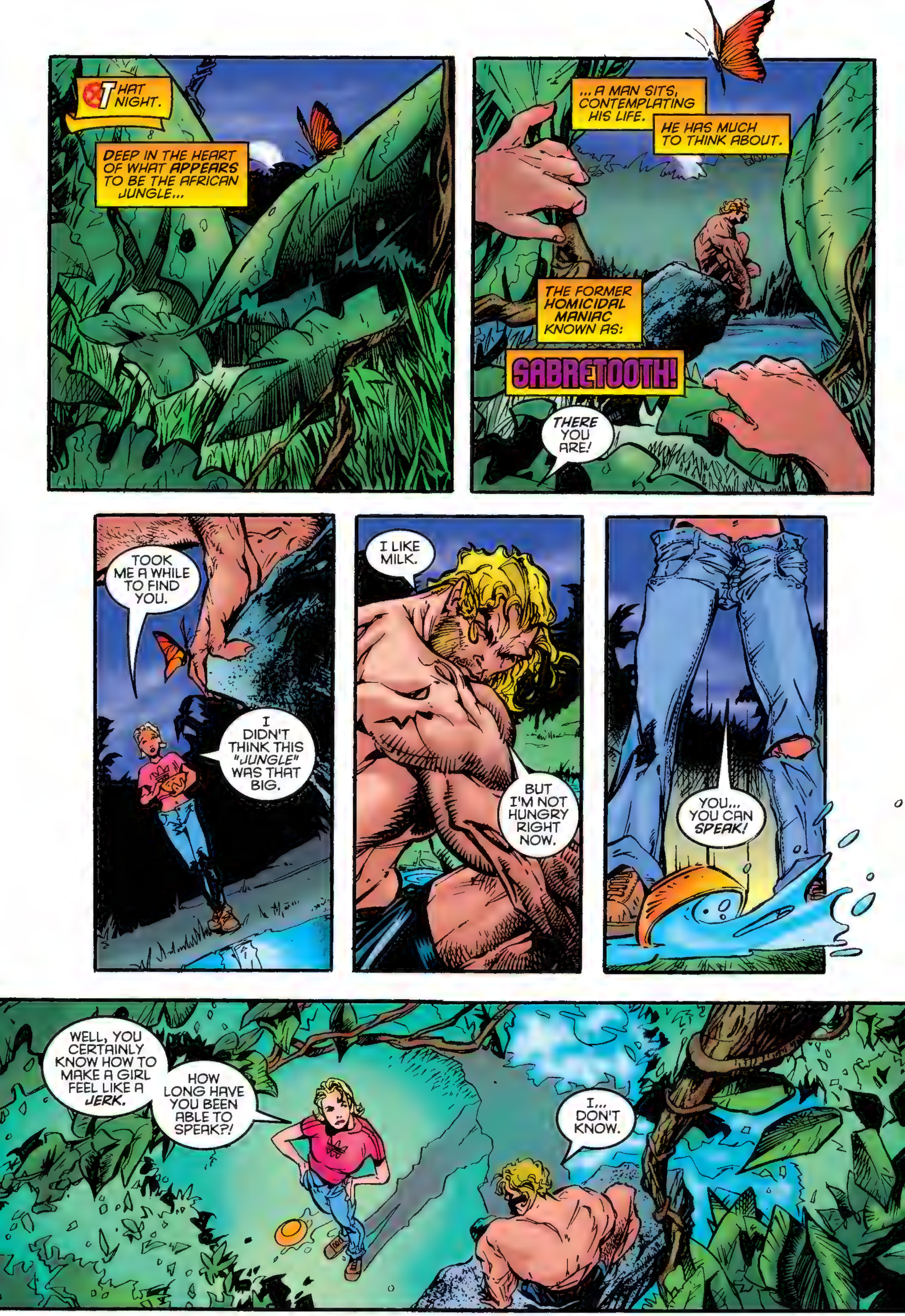

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE.
THE MEDI-LAB.
THE PATIENT'S NAME IS SHATTERSTAR.
INJURED ON A MISSION, HE'S BEEN IN SICK BAY MUCH TOO LONG.
SEE CABLE #22 -- Dr. Bob Harras, MD.
HEY, 'STAR.
YOU GONNA LIVE OR WHAT?
OF COURSE, I AM GOING TO LIVE!
IF THAT MAD Dr. McCOY WOULD ONLY RELEASE ME --
-- I WOULD BE GLADLY FIGHTING AT YOUR SIDE.
HAS SIRYN RETURNED YET?
I DO NOT KNOW. THE ONLY OTHER PERSON I HAVE SEEN IS Dr. McCOY.
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING? BOOMER HASN'T VISITED YOU?
I ASSUMED SHE WAS WITH YOU.
WHILE I HAVE BEEN POKED, PRODDED, AND PRICKED, AND HAD MY TEMPERATURE TAKEN IN THE ODDEST PLACES.
NOW, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU BOYS?
WHO? US? WE DON'T NEED ANYTHING, GUYS, DO WE?
GOOD AFTERNOON, Dr. McCOY...

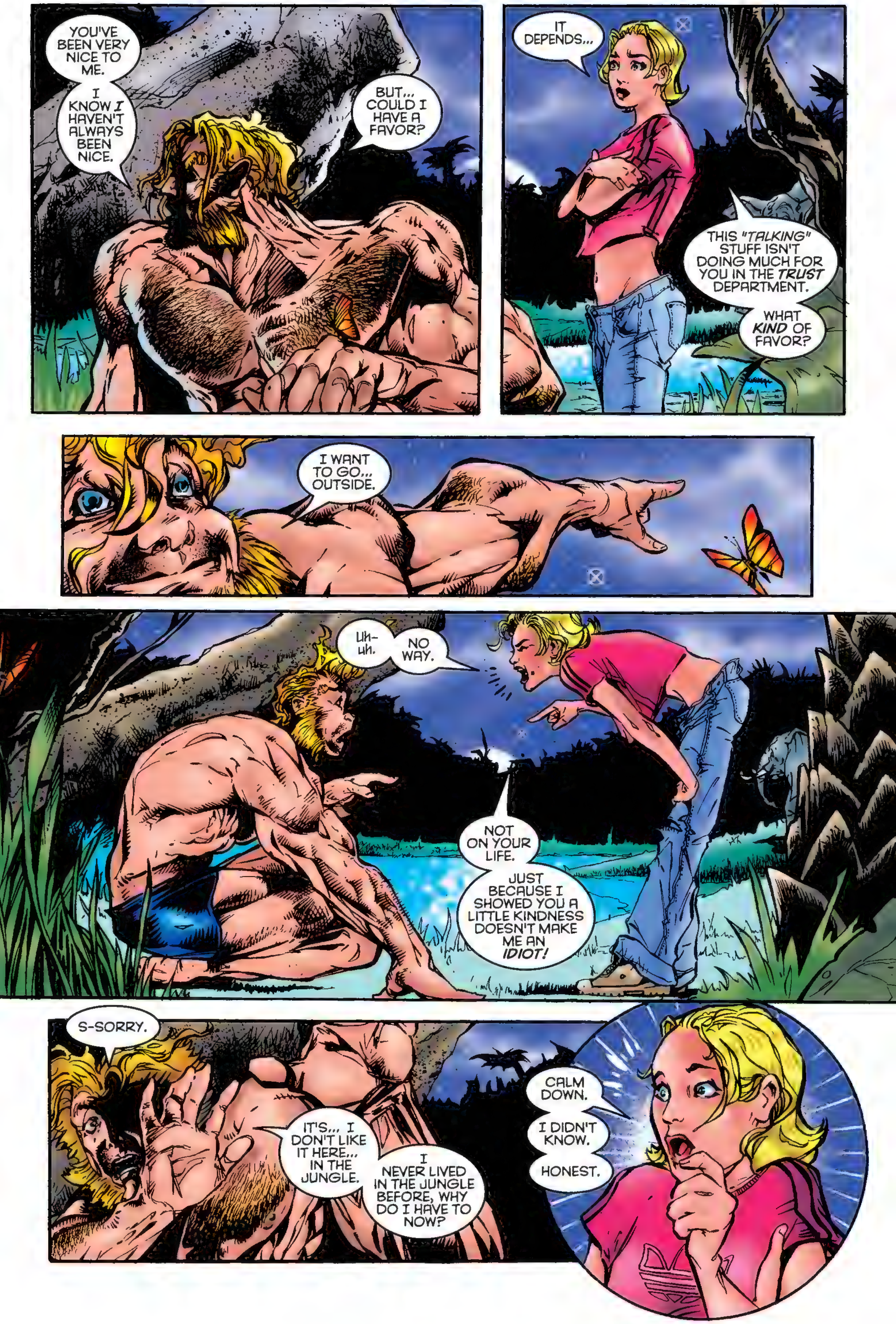

A TRAILER PARK IN JONESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA.
THE LAST KNOWN ADDRESS FOR ONE MARTY SMITH.
RING RING RING
RING RING RING
A TOILET FLUSHES.
AND AS MARTY SMITH -- "SMITTY" TO THE GUYS DOWN AT THE MARLIN CAFE -- AMBLES TO THE PHONE.
HE KINDA WONDERS WHY HE EVEN PAYS THE PHONE BILL --
-- SINCE THE ONLY PEOPLE CALLIN' HIM ARE DEADBEATS AND BILL COLLECTORS.
RI-
YEAH. WHO IS IT? SPEAK UP, YA ROACH!
IS THAT YOU, GUS?
I OUGHTA BEAT YER BRAINS IN WHEN I...
EVEN THOUGH THE GIRL NAMED BOOMER HAS THE MUTANT POWER TO LEVEL THE TRAILER PARK...
...THE SOUND OF HER FATHER'S VOICE IS ENOUGH TO TERRORIZE HER.
THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.
AND SADLY, THERE IS NOTHING SHE CAN DO ABOUT IT...

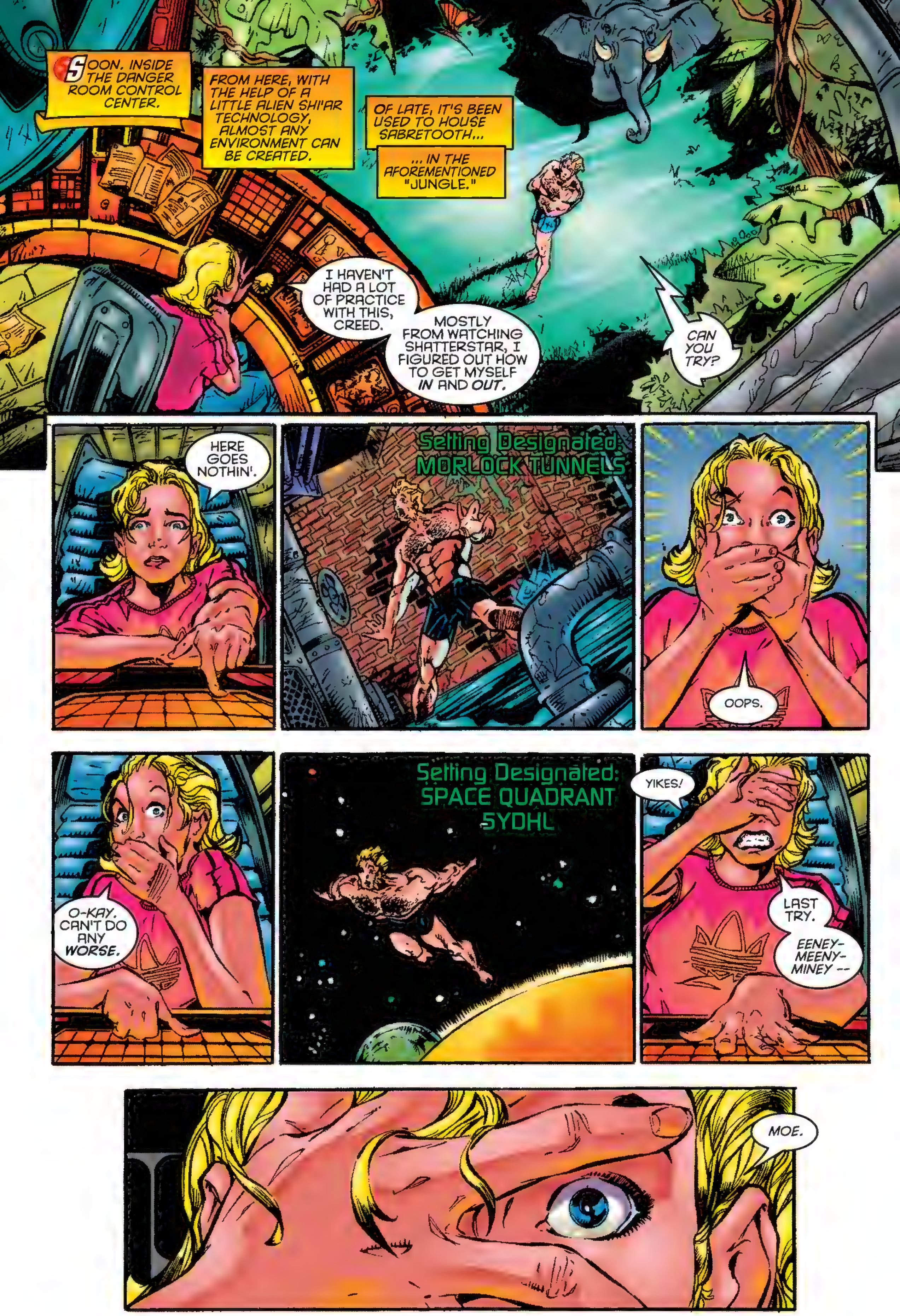

LATER THAT DAY...
ANOTHER TRAVELER LANDS ON THE LAWN AT THE XAVIER INSTITUTE.
ONLY THIS TIME, IT IS WITH GRACE AND CONFIDENCE.
SIRYN HAS COME HOME.
'LO, JIMMY.
THERESA?
THERESA, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
HIS HEART SKIPS A BEAT AT SEEING HER.
OF COURSE I'M ALL RIGHT, JIMMY.
HOW ARE ALL THE OTHERS? BOBBY AND SUCH?
FINE. FINE. THERESA, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I'VE... *WE'VE* ALL MISSED YOU.
I'VE MISSED YE TOO, JIMMY. ALL O' YE.
BUT, RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT TO TALK WIT' CABLE.
HE'S IN WITH XAVIER, BUT --
I'LL CATCH UP WITH YE LATER, THEN, 'KAY?
SURE.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO...

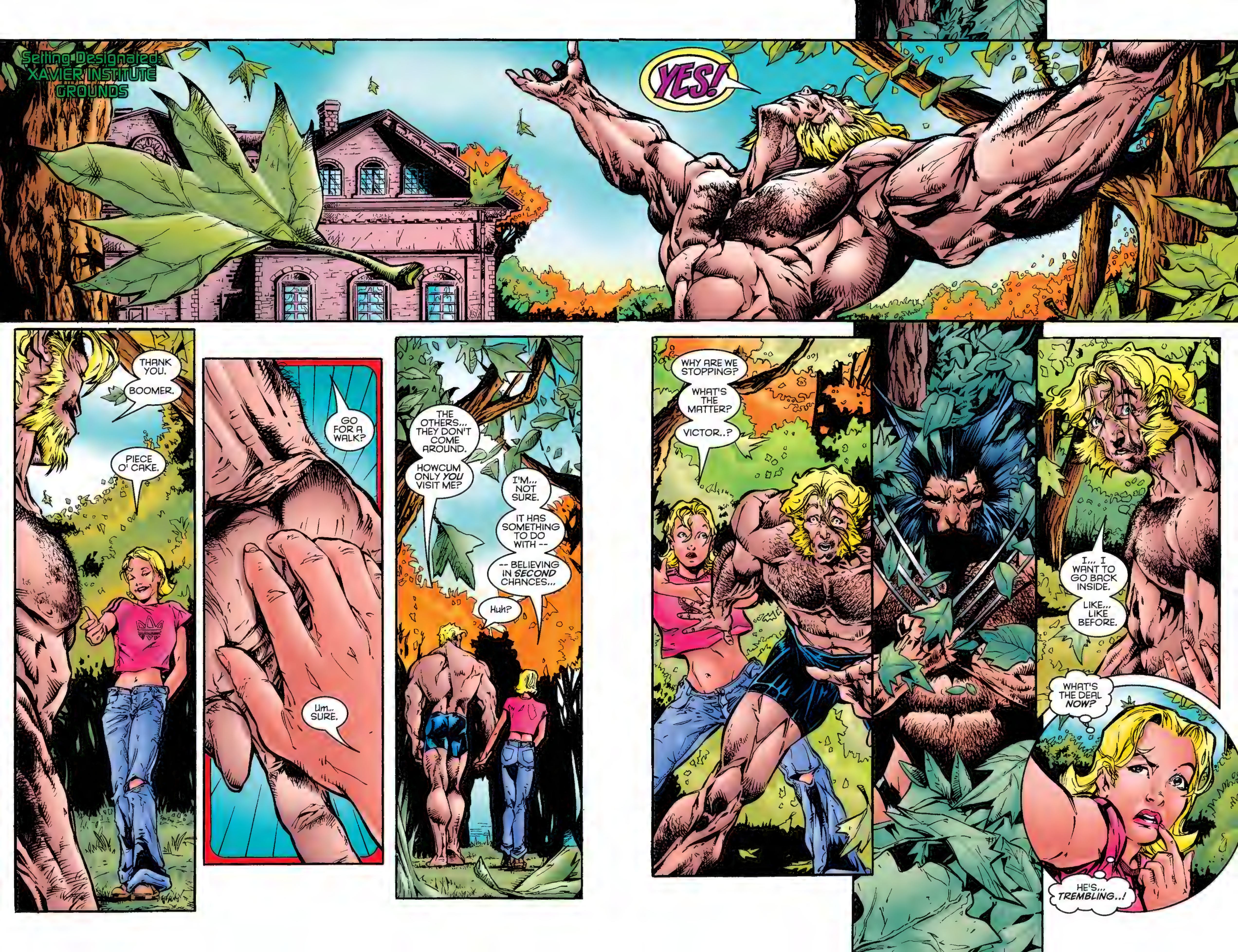

ALL I'M SAYING, XAVIER, IS THAT *SOMEONE* WAS *ONE* STEP AHEAD OF US, THE WHOLE TIME WE WERE IN SIBERIA.
WE LOST THE MIMIC *ENTIRELY.*
AND SINCE *YOU* SENT US ON THE MISSION, I WAS WONDERING IF *YOU* KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
I'M NOT SURE I LIKE THE TENOR OF YOUR QUESTION, NATHAN.
THE MEN WHO WORKED AT THAT TRACKING STATION WERE VALUABLE ALLIES OF THE MUTANT UNDERGROUND.
IF SOMEONE IS *ON* TO THAT SYSTEM...
PROFESSOR. CABLE.
I APOLOGIZE FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT I JUST GOT BACK --
-- AND I KNOW YE'LL BOTH WANT TO HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO REPORT.
AS YE KNOW, I'VE BEEN... STAYING AT THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE... OBSERVING.
DOCTOR WEISMAN SENDS HER REGARDS TO YE, PROFESSOR, AND APOLOGIZES FER BEIN' NEGLIGENT WITH HER REPORTS.
I'M RELIEVED TO FIND THAT MY OLD COLLEAGUE IS WELL.
THESE ARE THE MOST UP TO DATE LISTINGS OF PATIENTS AND Dr. WEISMAN'S FINDINGS.
AND I MIGHT ADD, SHE'S QUITE A REMARKABLE WOMAN.
THERESA. CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE.
I CERTAINLY PICKED THE RIGHT PERSON TO REPLACE *SAM* AS X-FORCE'S *DEPUTY LEADER.*
ACTUALLY, CABLE, IT WAS PRETTY MUCH AS WE PLANNED.
I WISH ALL OUR MISSIONS WENT AS SMOOTHLY...

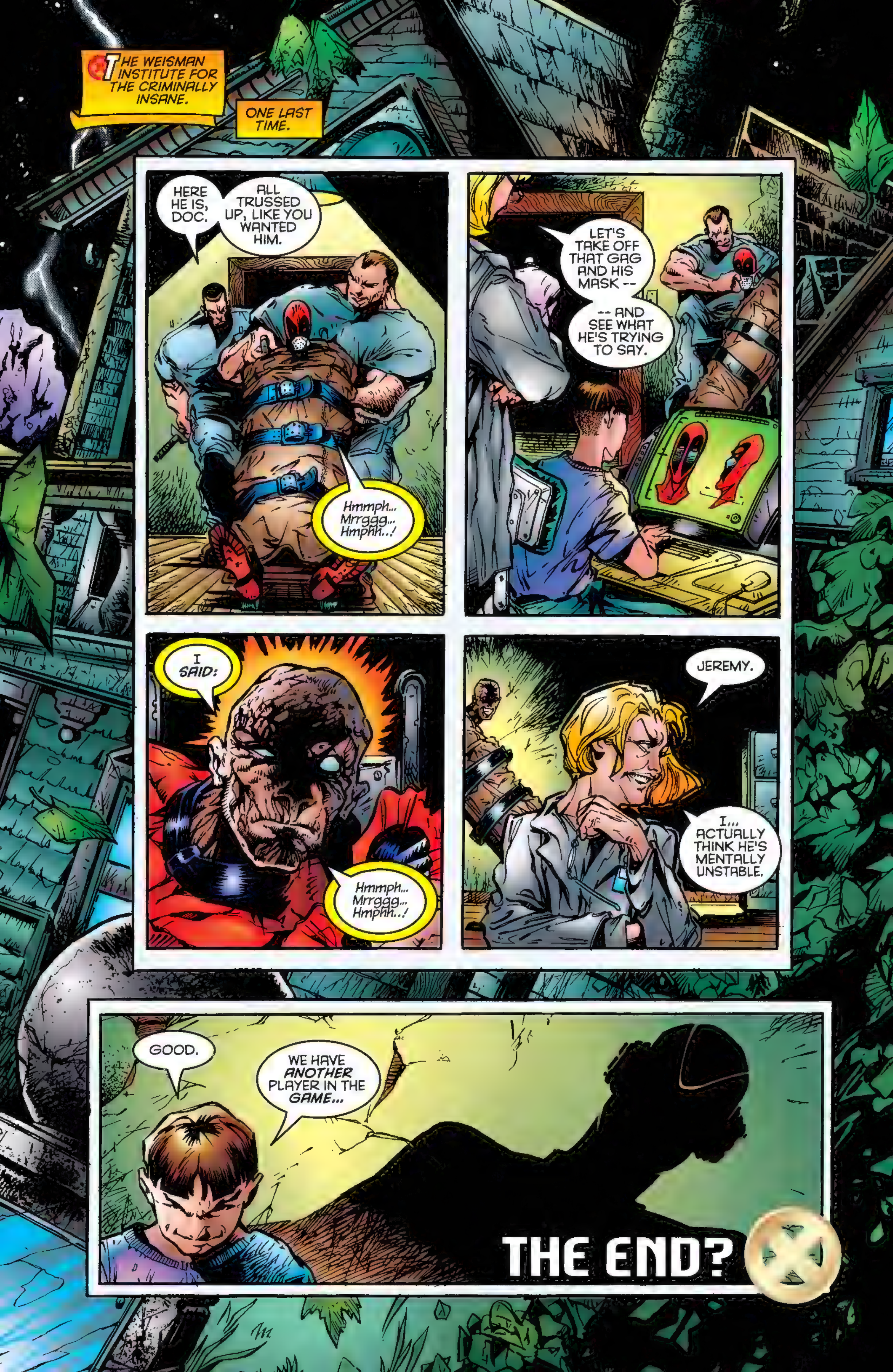

OUTSIDE...
JEOPARDIZED THE ENTIRE MISSION.
ACTED IMPULSIVELY.
RECKLESSLY.
CABLE RISKED HIS LIFE FREEING ME FROM REIGNFIRE --
-- AND HOW DO I REPAY HIM?
BOBBY.
SPEAKING AS AN EXPERT...
...YOU WORRY TOO MUCH.
YES, YOU DISOBEYED A DIRECT ORDER IN SIBERIA.
YOU MADE A MISTAKE.
LEARN FROM IT.
BESIDES, YOU EARNED SOME BONUS POINTS FOR SAVING THE PACRAT.
I WILL TRY EVEN HARDER NEXT TIME, SIR.
WAIT A SECOND -- !
WHERE DID YOU LEARN...
...THAT LANGUAGE?!
WHAT? I JUST SAID "THANKS".
IN ENGLISH.
DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE...
...I SWEAR I JUST HEARD HIM SPEAK IN ASKANI!


THAT NIGHT.
DEEP IN THE HEART OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE AFRICAN JUNGLE...
...A MAN SITS, CONTEMPLATING HIS LIFE.
HE HAS MUCH TO THINK ABOUT.
THE FORMER HOMICIDAL MANIAC KNOWN AS:
SABRETOOTH!
THERE YOU ARE!
TOOK ME A WHILE TO FIND YOU.
I DIDN'T THINK THIS "JUNGLE" WAS THAT BIG.
I LIKE MILK.
BUT I'M NOT HUNGRY RIGHT NOW.
YOU... YOU CAN SPEAK!
WELL, YOU CERTAINLY KNOW HOW TO MAKE A GIRL FEEL LIKE A JERK.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO SPEAK?!
I... DON'T KNOW.


YOU'VE BEEN VERY NICE TO ME.
I KNOW *I* HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN NICE.
BUT... COULD I HAVE A FAVOR?
IT DEPENDS...
THIS *"TALKING"* STUFF ISN'T DOING MUCH FOR YOU IN THE *TRUST* DEPARTMENT.
WHAT *KIND* OF FAVOR?
I WANT TO GO... OUTSIDE.
UH-UH.
NO WAY.
NOT ON YOUR LIFE.
JUST BECAUSE I SHOWED YOU A LITTLE KINDNESS DOESN'T MAKE ME AN *IDIOT!*
S-SORRY.
IT'S... I DON'T LIKE IT HERE... IN THE JUNGLE.
I NEVER LIVED IN THE JUNGLE BEFORE, WHY DO I HAVE TO NOW?
CALM DOWN.
I DIDN'T KNOW.
HONEST.

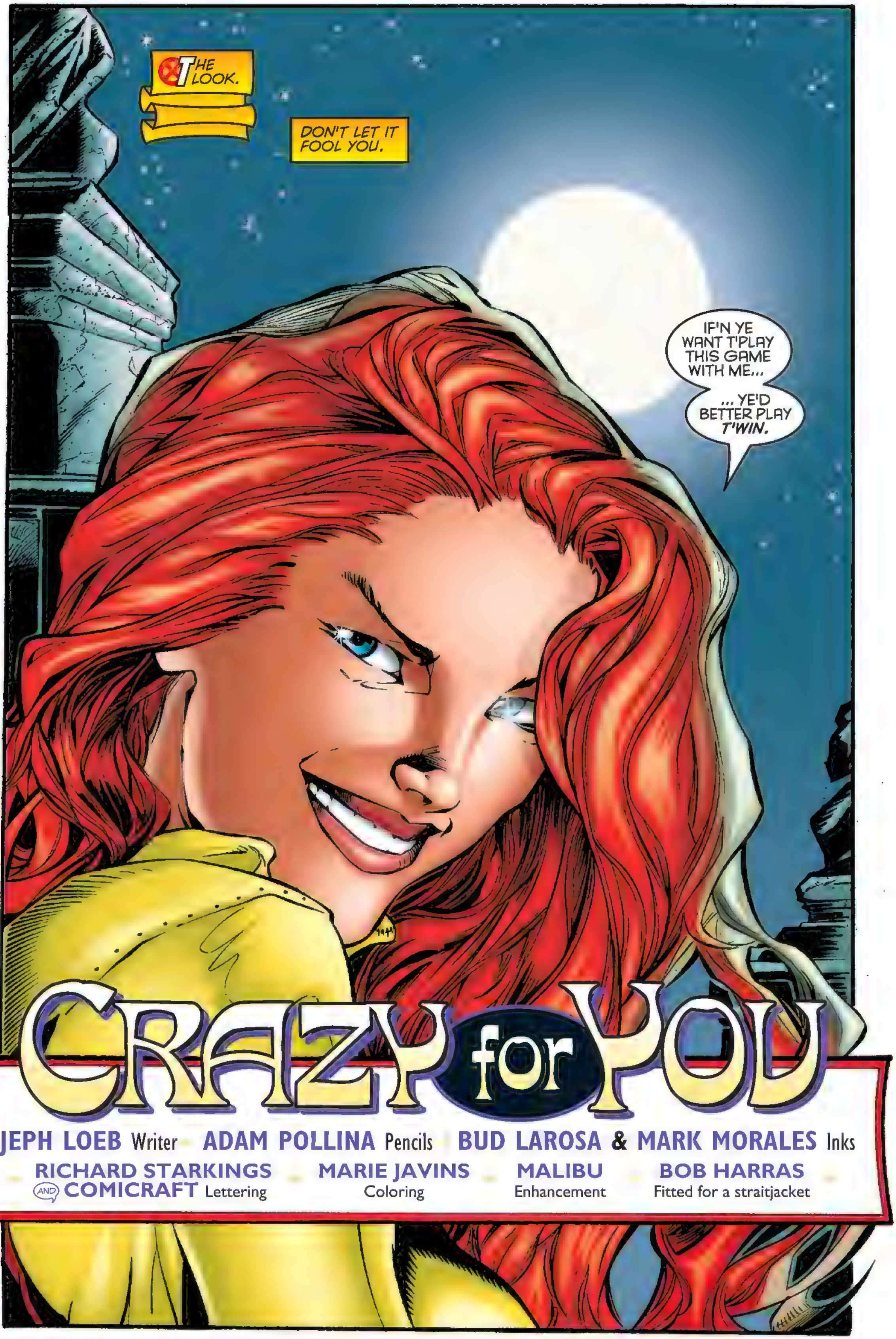

SOON. INSIDE THE DANGER ROOM CONTROL CENTER.
FROM HERE, WITH THE HELP OF A LITTLE ALIEN SHI'AR TECHNOLOGY, ALMOST ANY ENVIRONMENT CAN BE CREATED.
OF LATE, IT'S BEEN USED TO HOUSE SABRETOOTH...
...IN THE AFOREMENTIONED "JUNGLE."
I HAVEN'T HAD A LOT OF PRACTICE WITH THIS, CREED.
MOSTLY FROM WATCHING SHATTERSTAR, I FIGURED OUT HOW TO GET MYSELF IN AND OUT.
CAN YOU TRY?
HERE GOES NOTHIN'.
Setting Designated: MORLOCK TUNNELS
OOPS.
O-KAY. CAN'T DO ANY WORSE.
Setting Designated: SPACE QUADRANT SYDHL
YIKES!
LAST TRY.
EENEY-MEENY-MINEY --
MOE.


Setting Designated: XAVIER INSTITUTE GROUNDS
YES!
THANK YOU.
BOOMER.
PIECE O' CAKE.
GO FOR A WALK?
UM... SURE.
THE OTHERS... THEY DON'T COME AROUND.
HOWCUM ONLY YOU VISIT ME?
I'M... NOT SURE.
IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH --
-- BELIEVING IN SECOND CHANCES...
HUH?
WHY ARE WE STOPPING?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
VICTOR..?
I... I WANT TO GO BACK INSIDE.
LIKE... LIKE BEFORE.
WHAT'S THE DEAL NOW?
HE'S... TREMBLING..!


THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE.
ONE LAST TIME.
HERE HE IS, DOC.
ALL TRUSSED UP, LIKE YOU WANTED HIM.
Hmmph... Mrrggg... Hmphh..!
LET'S TAKE OFF THAT GAG AND HIS MASK --
-- AND SEE WHAT HE'S TRYING TO SAY.
I SAID:
Hmmph... Mrrggg... Hmphh..!
JEREMY.
I... ACTUALLY THINK HE'S MENTALLY UNSTABLE.
GOOD.
WE HAVE ANOTHER PLAYER IN THE GAME...
THE END?

MARVEL COMICS
X-MEN
JULY '96
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
X-FORCE
SPECIAL ONSLAUGHT™ UPDATE INSIDE!
GUEST-STARRING EVERYONE'S FAVORITE MERC-WITH-A-MOUTH!
ADAM Pollina SELLERS ·96·
TOO MANY DEADPOOLS!™

[redacted]


THE LOOK.
DON'T LET IT FOOL YOU.
IF'N YE WANT T'PLAY THIS GAME WITH ME...
...YE'D BETTER PLAY T'WIN.

CRAZY for YOU

JEPH LOEB Writer **ADAM POLLINA** Pencils **BUD LAROSA & MARK MORALES** Inks
RICHARD STARKINGS AND COMICRAFT Lettering **MARIE JAVINS** Coloring **MALIBU** Enhancement **BOB HARRAS** Fitted for a straitjacket

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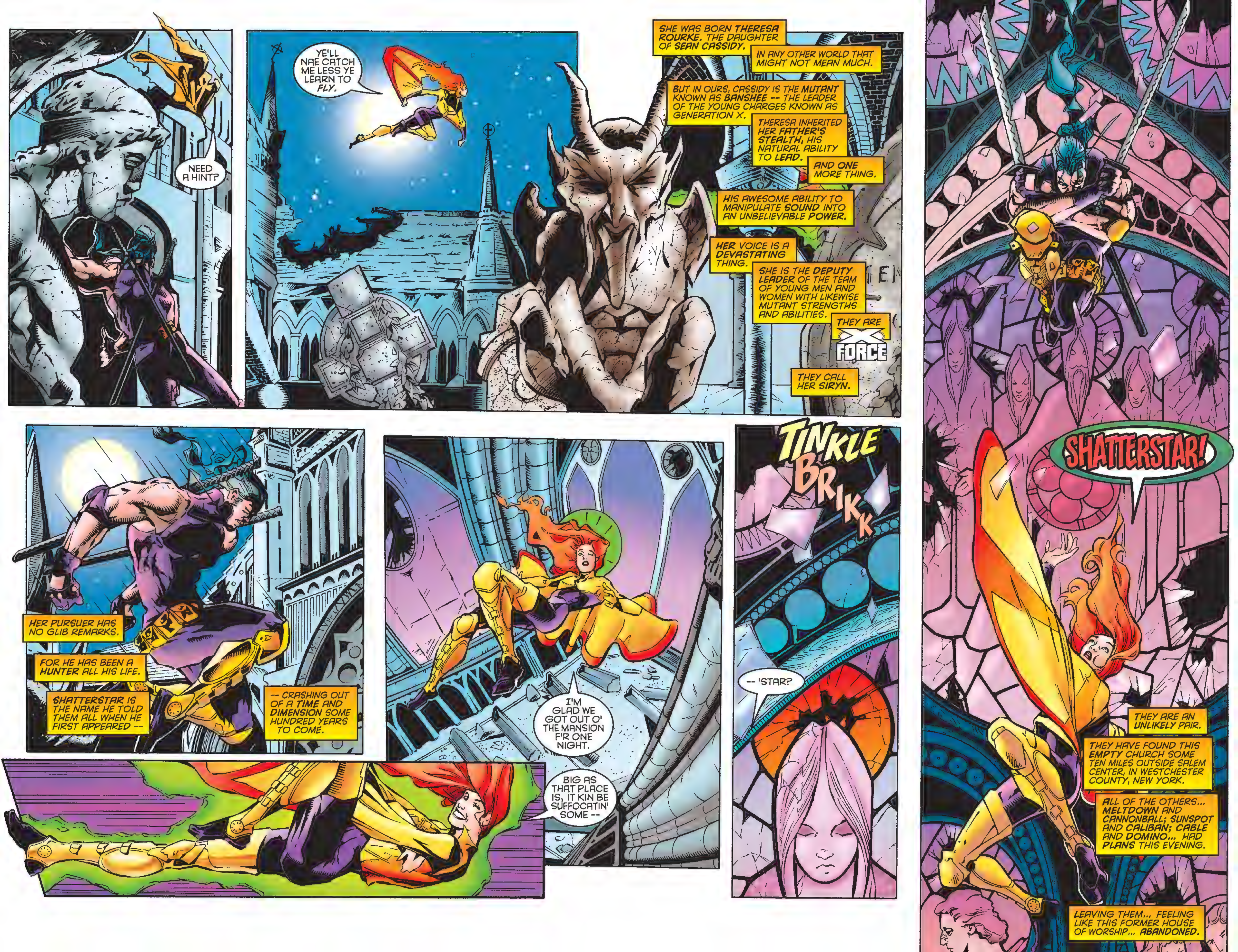
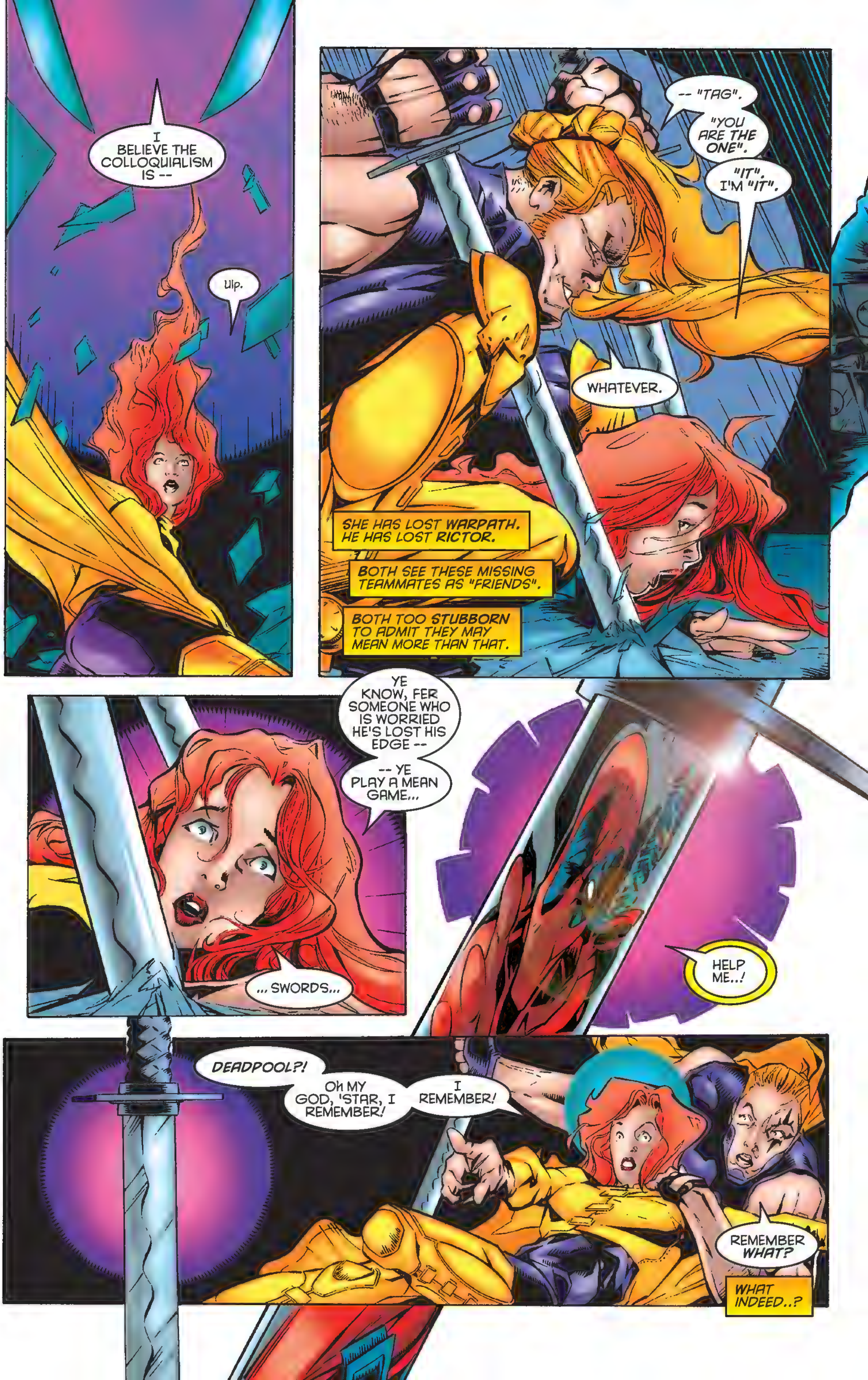
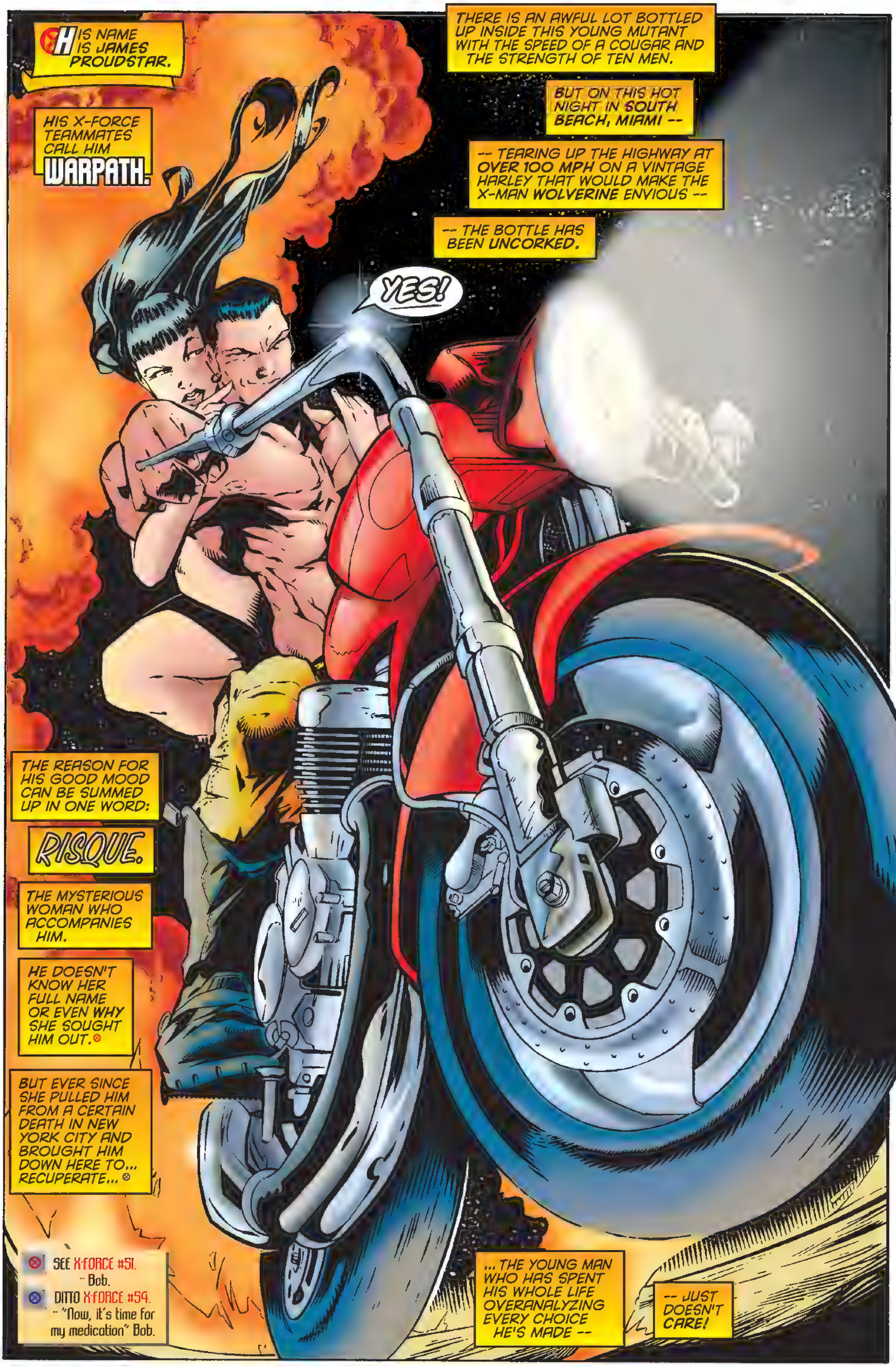
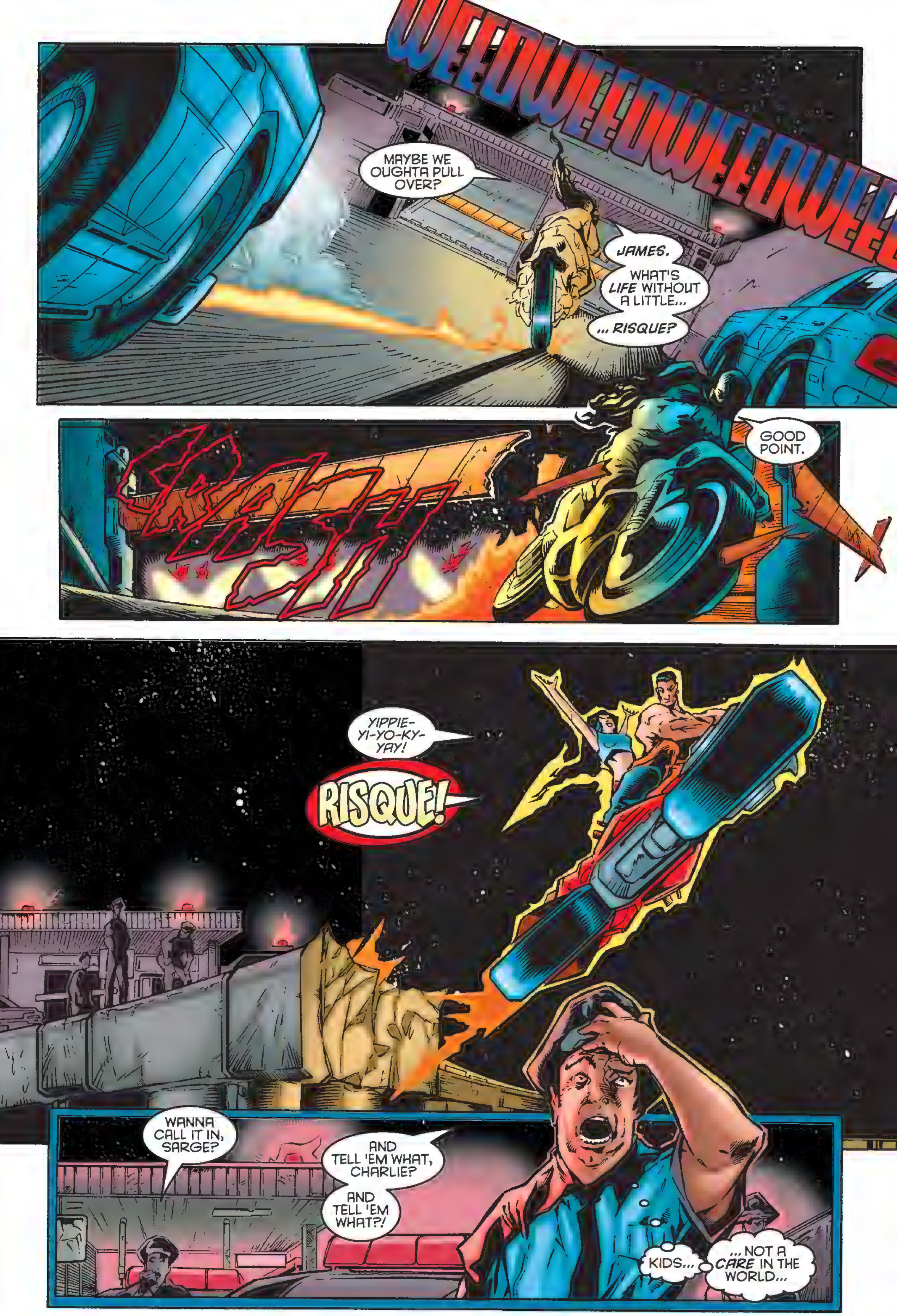
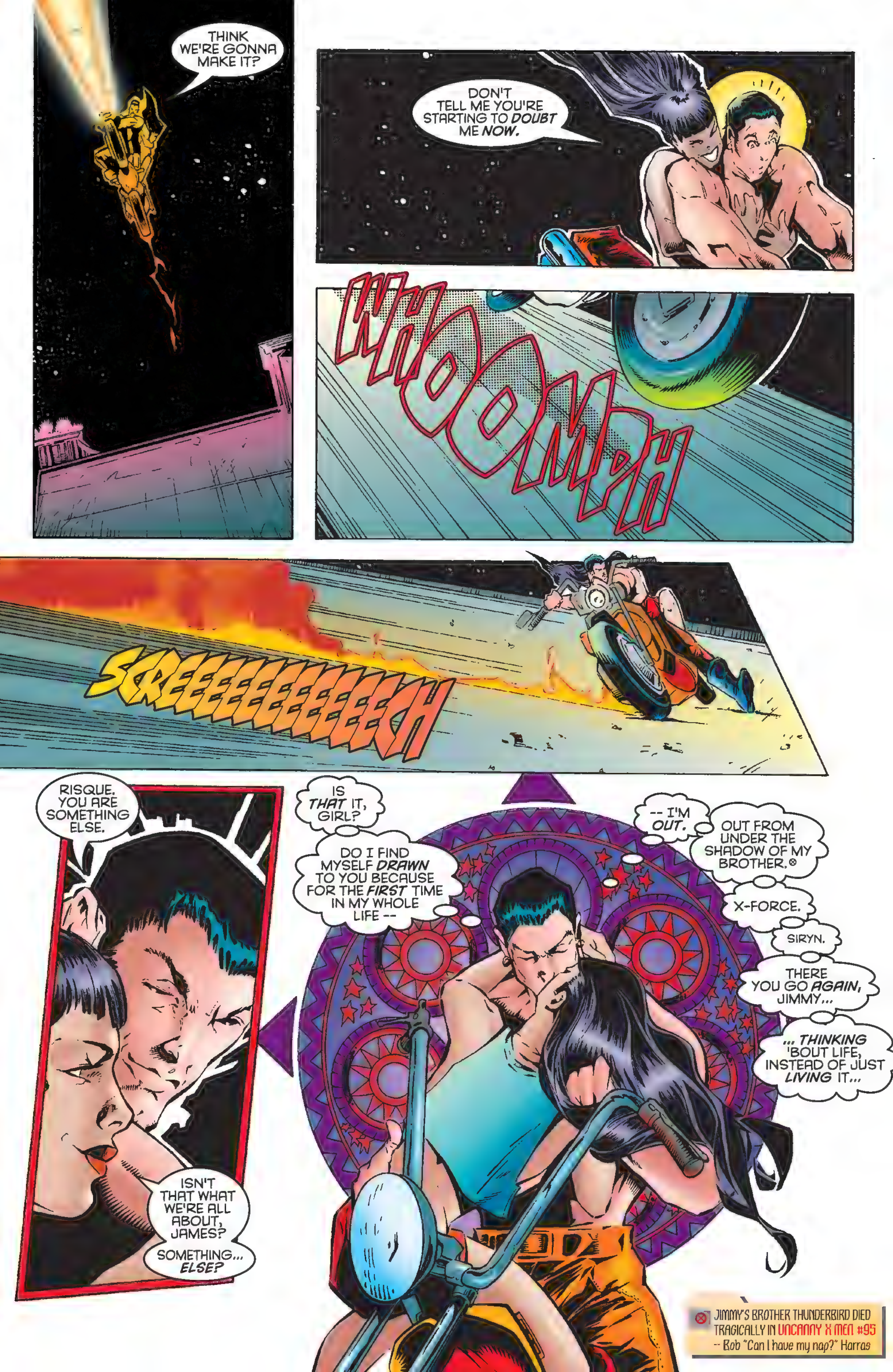
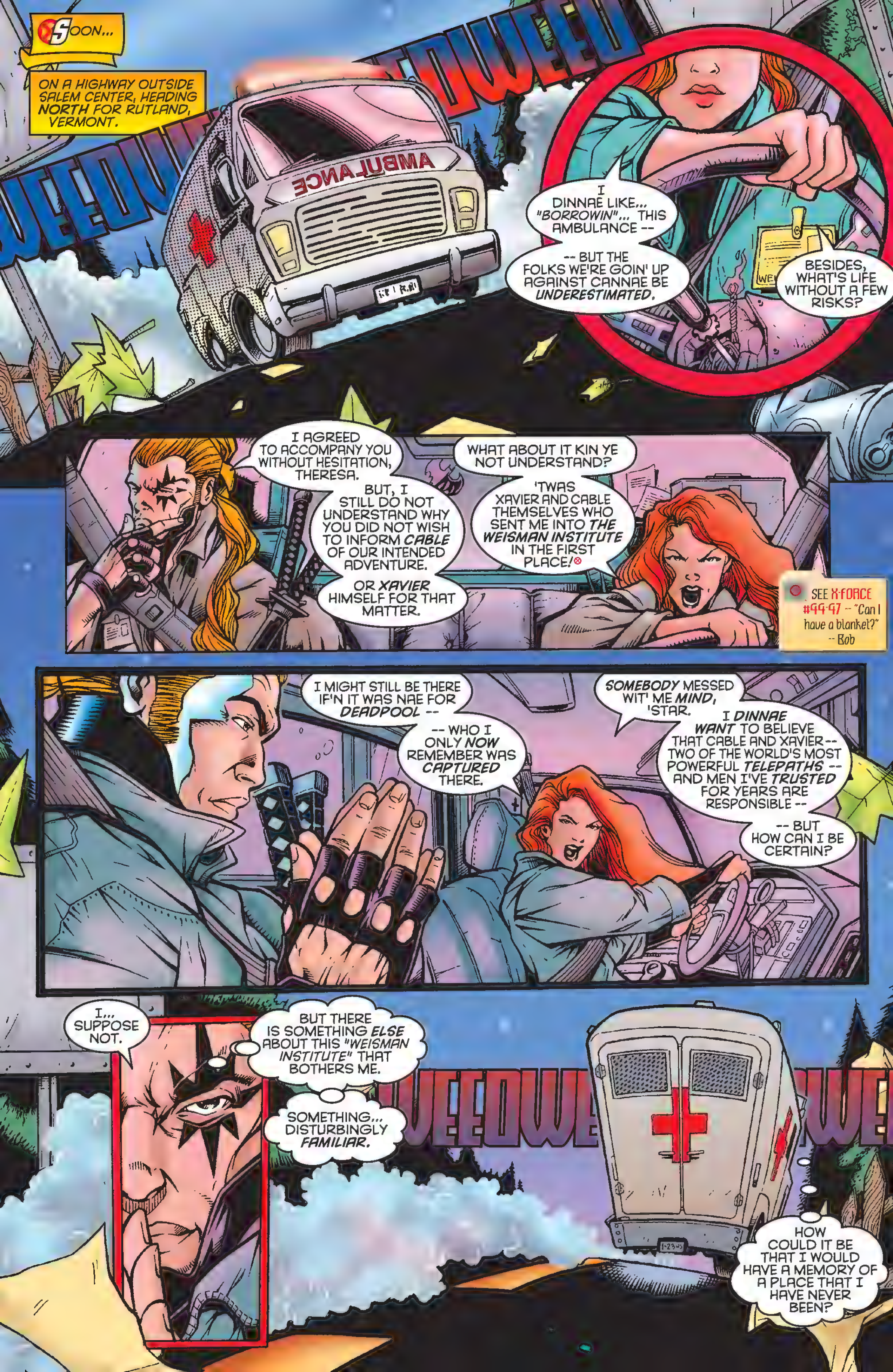

NEED A HINT?
YE'LL NAE CATCH ME LESS YE LEARN TO *FLY*.
SHE WAS BORN **THERESA ROURKE**. THE DAUGHTER OF **SEAN CASSIDY**.
IN ANY OTHER WORLD THAT MIGHT NOT MEAN MUCH.
BUT IN OURS, CASSIDY IS THE **MUTANT** KNOWN AS **BANSHEE** -- THE LEADER OF THE YOUNG CHARGES KNOWN AS GENERATION X.
THERESA INHERITED HER **FATHER'S STEALTH**, HIS NATURAL ABILITY TO **LEAD**.
AND ONE MORE THING.
HIS AWESOME ABILITY TO MANIPULATE **SOUND** INTO AN UNBELIEVABLE **POWER**.
HER VOICE IS A **DEVASTATING** THING.
SHE IS THE **DEPUTY LEADER** OF THE TEAM OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WITH LIKEWISE MUTANT STRENGTHS AND ABILITIES.
THEY ARE X-FORCE
THEY CALL HER **SIRYN**.
HER PURSUER HAS NO GLIB REMARKS.
FOR HE HAS BEEN A **HUNTER** ALL HIS LIFE.
SHATTERSTAR IS THE NAME HE TOLD THEM ALL WHEN HE FIRST APPEARED --
-- CRASHING OUT OF A **TIME** AND **DIMENSION** SOME HUNDRED YEARS TO COME.
I'M GLAD WE GOT OUT O' THE MANSION F'R ONE NIGHT.
BIG AS THAT PLACE IS, IT KIN BE SUFFOCATIN' SOME --
TINKLE
BRIKK
-- 'STAR?
SHATTERSTAR!
THEY ARE AN **UNLIKELY** PAIR.
THEY HAVE FOUND THIS **EMPTY CHURCH** SOME TEN MILES OUTSIDE SALEM CENTER, IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK.
ALL OF THE OTHERS... **MELTDOWN** AND **CANNONBALL**; **SUNSPOT** AND **CALIBAN**; **CABLE** AND **DOMINO**... HAD **PLANS** THIS EVENING.
LEAVING THEM... FEELING LIKE THIS FORMER HOUSE OF WORSHIP... **ABANDONED**.

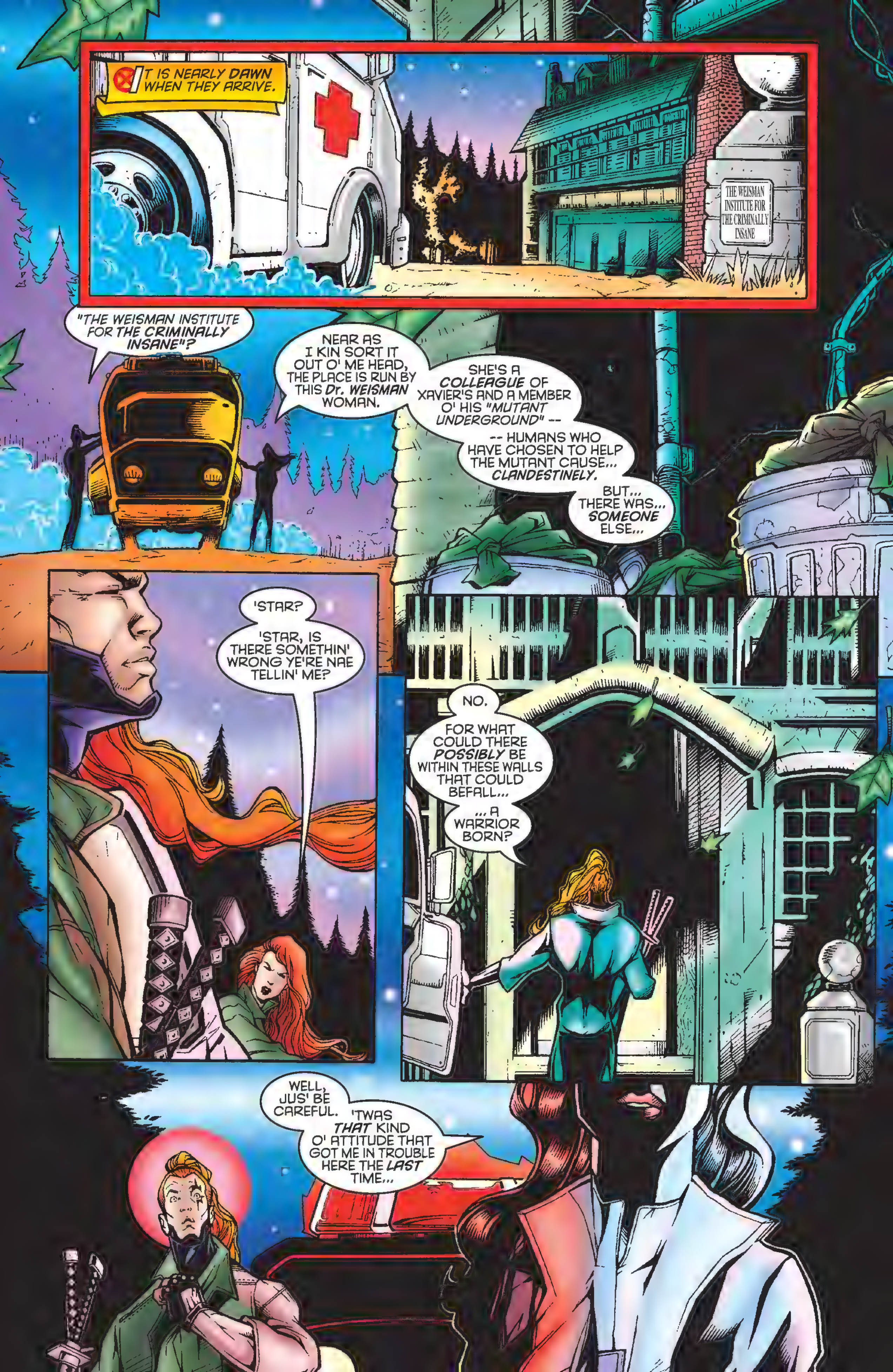

I BELIEVE THE COLLOQUIALISM IS --
Ulp.
-- "TAG".
"YOU ARE THE ONE".
"IT". I'M "IT".
WHATEVER.
SHE HAS LOST WARPATH. HE HAS LOST RICTOR.
BOTH SEE THESE MISSING TEAMMATES AS "FRIENDS".
BOTH TOO STUBBORN TO ADMIT THEY MAY MEAN MORE THAN THAT.
YE KNOW, FER SOMEONE WHO IS WORRIED HE'S LOST HIS EDGE --
-- YE PLAY A MEAN GAME...
...SWORDS...
HELP ME...!
DEADPOOL?!
Oh MY GOD, 'STAR, I REMEMBER!
I REMEMBER!
REMEMBER WHAT?
WHAT INDEED..?

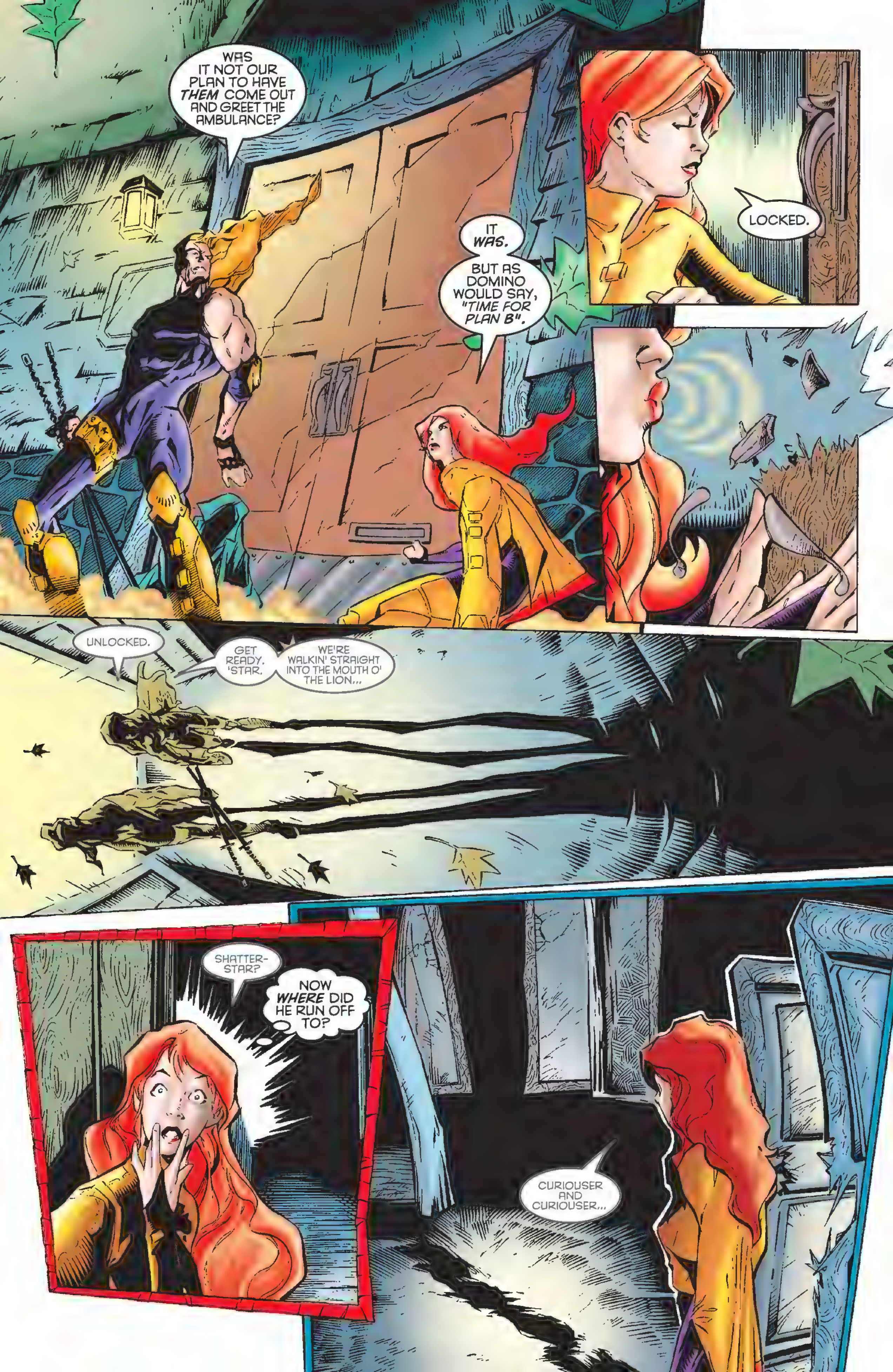

HIS NAME IS JAMES PROUDSTAR.
HIS X-FORCE TEAMMATES CALL HIM WARPATH.
THERE IS AN AWFUL LOT BOTTLED UP INSIDE THIS YOUNG MUTANT WITH THE SPEED OF A COUGAR AND THE STRENGTH OF TEN MEN.
BUT ON THIS HOT NIGHT IN SOUTH BEACH, MIAMI --
-- TEARING UP THE HIGHWAY AT OVER 100 MPH ON A VINTAGE HARLEY THAT WOULD MAKE THE X-MAN WOLVERINE ENVIOUS --
-- THE BOTTLE HAS BEEN UNCORKED.
YES!
THE REASON FOR HIS GOOD MOOD CAN BE SUMMED UP IN ONE WORD:
RISQUE.
THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN WHO ACCOMPANIES HIM.
HE DOESN'T KNOW HER FULL NAME OR EVEN WHY SHE SOUGHT HIM OUT.⊗
BUT EVER SINCE SHE PULLED HIM FROM A CERTAIN DEATH IN NEW YORK CITY AND BROUGHT HIM DOWN HERE TO... RECUPERATE...⊗
...THE YOUNG MAN WHO HAS SPENT HIS WHOLE LIFE OVERANALYZING EVERY CHOICE HE'S MADE --
-- JUST DOESN'T CARE!
⊗ SEE X-FORCE #51. -- Bob.
⊗ DITTO X-FORCE #54. -- "Now, it's time for my medication" Bob.

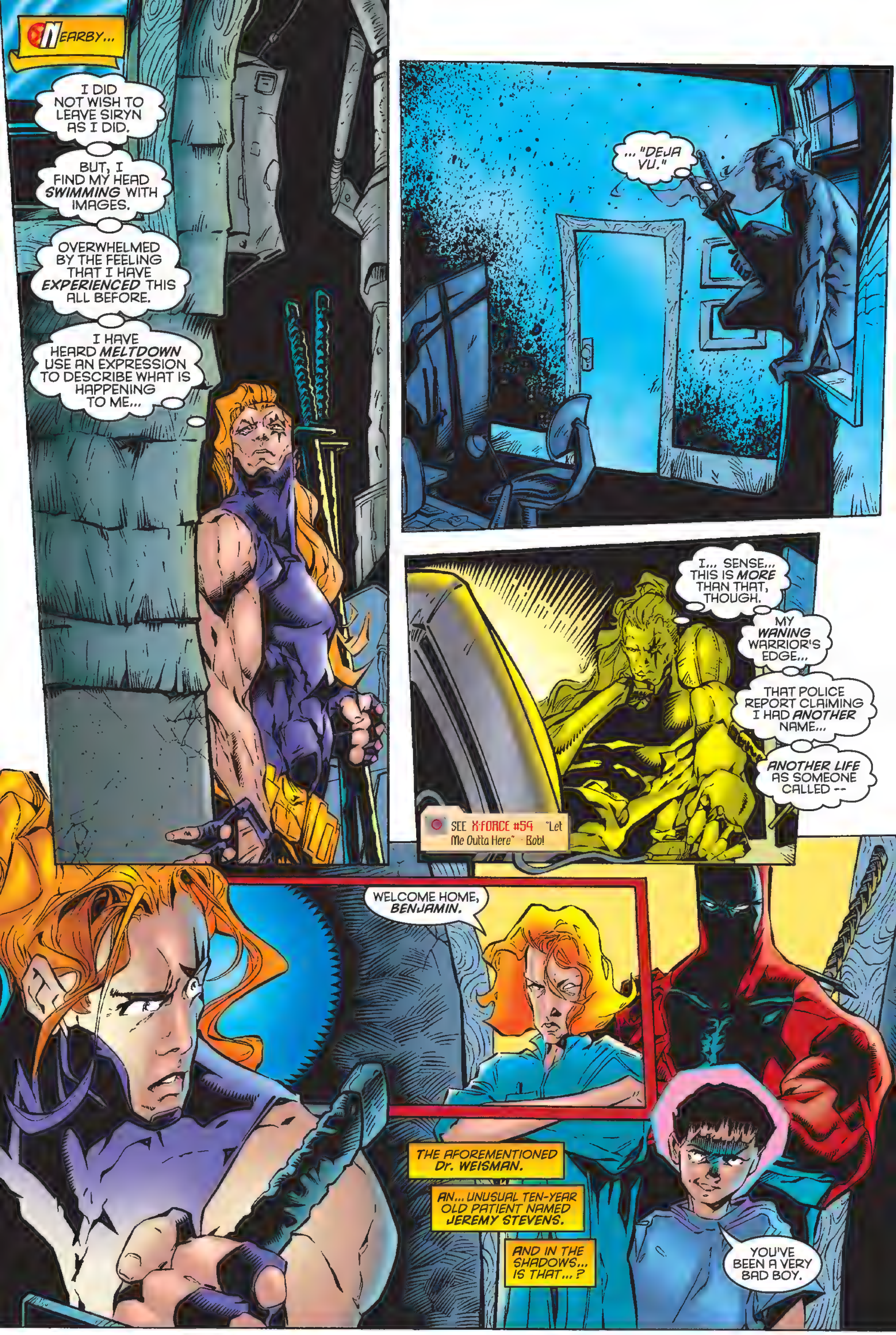

WEEDWEEDWEEDWEEDWEE
MAYBE WE OUGHTA PULL OVER?
JAMES.
WHAT'S *LIFE* WITHOUT A LITTLE...
... *RISQUE?*
KASH
GOOD POINT.
YIPPIE-YI-YO-KY-YAY!
RISQUE!
WANNA CALL IT IN, SARGE?
AND TELL 'EM WHAT, CHARLIE?
AND TELL 'EM WHAT?!
KIDS...
... NOT A *CARE* IN THE WORLD...

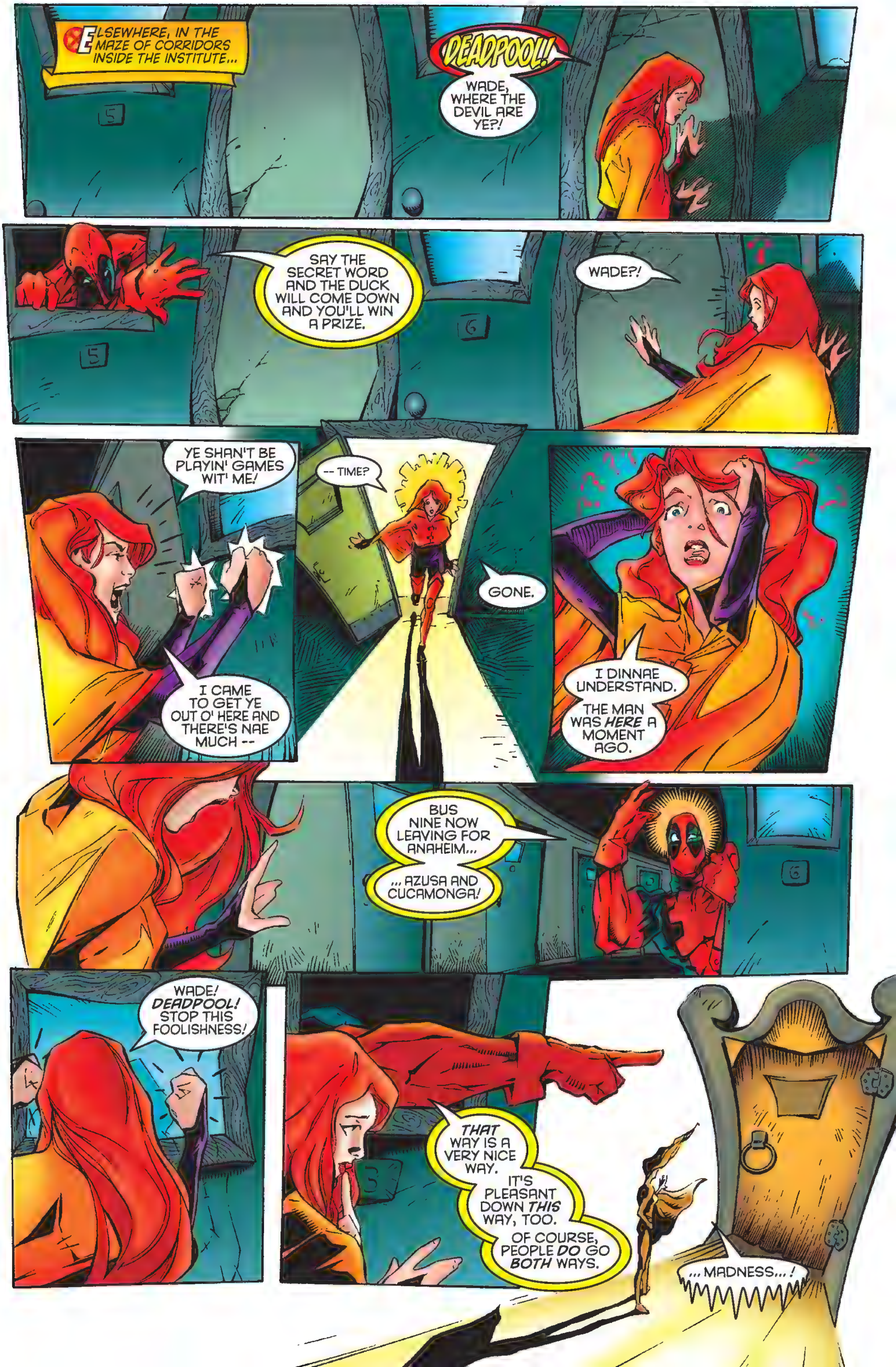

THINK WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE STARTING TO *DOUBT* ME *NOW.*
WHOOMPH
SCREEEEEEEEEEECH
RISQUE. YOU ARE SOMETHING ELSE.
IS *THAT* IT, GIRL?
DO I FIND MYSELF *DRAWN* TO YOU BECAUSE FOR THE *FIRST* TIME IN MY WHOLE LIFE --
-- I'M *OUT.*
OUT FROM UNDER THE SHADOW OF MY BROTHER.⊗
X-FORCE.
SIRYN.
THERE YOU GO *AGAIN,* JIMMY...
...*THINKING* 'BOUT LIFE, INSTEAD OF JUST *LIVING* IT...
ISN'T THAT WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT, JAMES?
SOMETHING... *ELSE?*
⊗ JIMMY'S BROTHER THUNDERBIRD DIED TRAGICALLY IN UNCANNY X MEN #95
-- Bob "Can I have my nap?" Harras

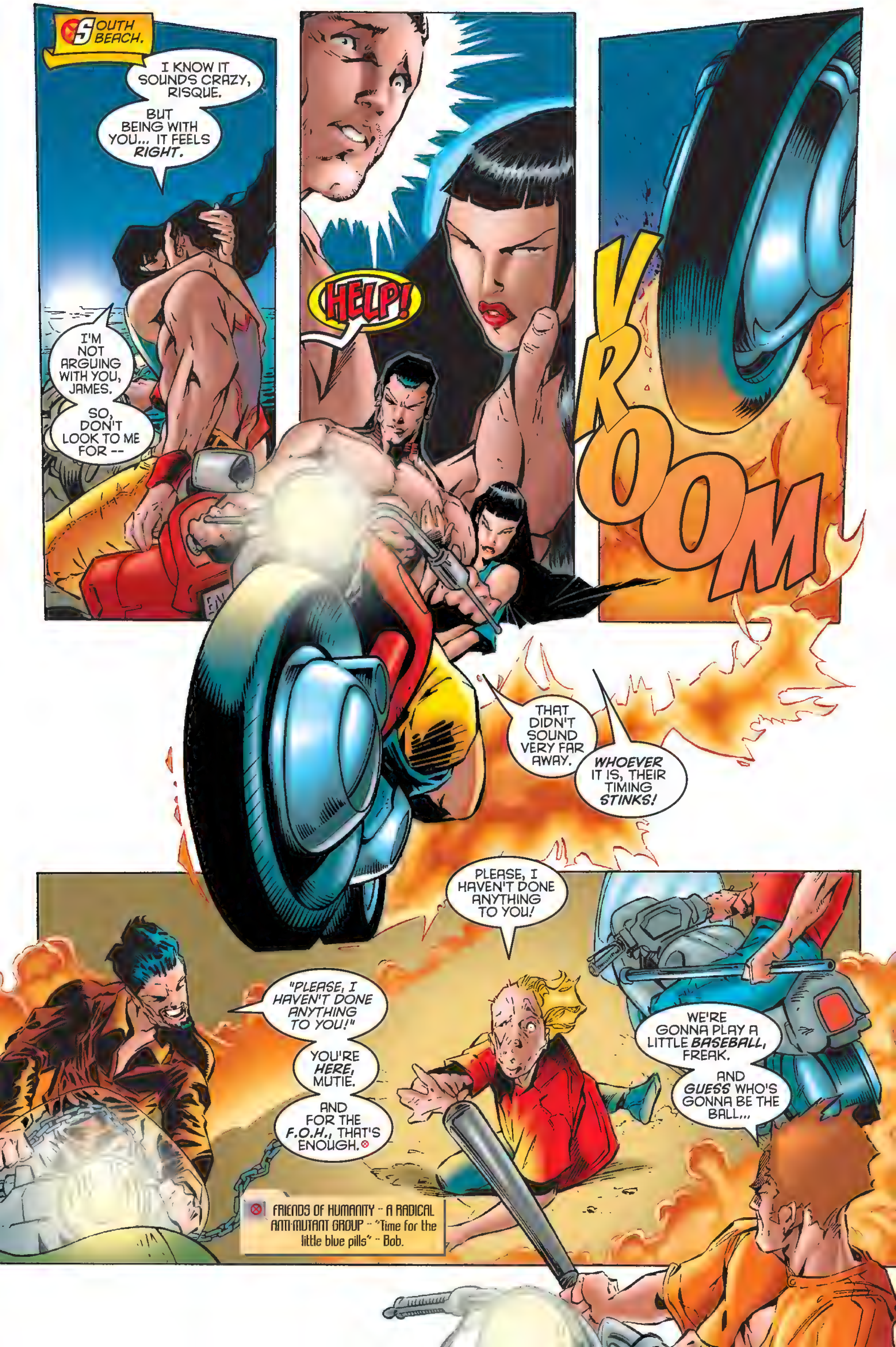

SOON...
ON A HIGHWAY OUTSIDE SALEM CENTER, HEADING NORTH FOR RUTLAND, VERMONT.
AMBULANCE
I DINNAE LIKE... "BORROWIN'"... THIS AMBULANCE --
-- BUT THE FOLKS WE'RE GOIN' UP AGAINST CANNAE BE UNDERESTIMATED.
BESIDES, WHAT'S LIFE WITHOUT A FEW RISKS?
I AGREED TO ACCOMPANY YOU WITHOUT HESITATION, THERESA.
BUT, I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DID NOT WISH TO INFORM CABLE OF OUR INTENDED ADVENTURE.
OR XAVIER HIMSELF FOR THAT MATTER.
WHAT ABOUT IT KIN YE NOT UNDERSTAND?
'TWAS XAVIER AND CABLE THEMSELVES WHO SENT ME INTO THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE IN THE FIRST PLACE!
SEE X-FORCE #44-47 -- "Can I have a blanket?" -- Bob
I MIGHT STILL BE THERE IF'N IT WAS NAE FOR DEADPOOL --
-- WHO I ONLY NOW REMEMBER WAS CAPTURED THERE.
SOMEBODY MESSED WIT' ME MIND, 'STAR.
I DINNAE WANT TO BELIEVE THAT CABLE AND XAVIER -- TWO OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL TELEPATHS -- AND MEN I'VE TRUSTED FOR YEARS ARE RESPONSIBLE --
-- BUT HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN?
I... SUPPOSE NOT.
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT THIS "WEISMAN INSTITUTE" THAT BOTHERS ME.
SOMETHING... DISTURBINGLY FAMILIAR.
HOW COULD IT BE THAT I WOULD HAVE A MEMORY OF A PLACE THAT I HAVE NEVER BEEN?

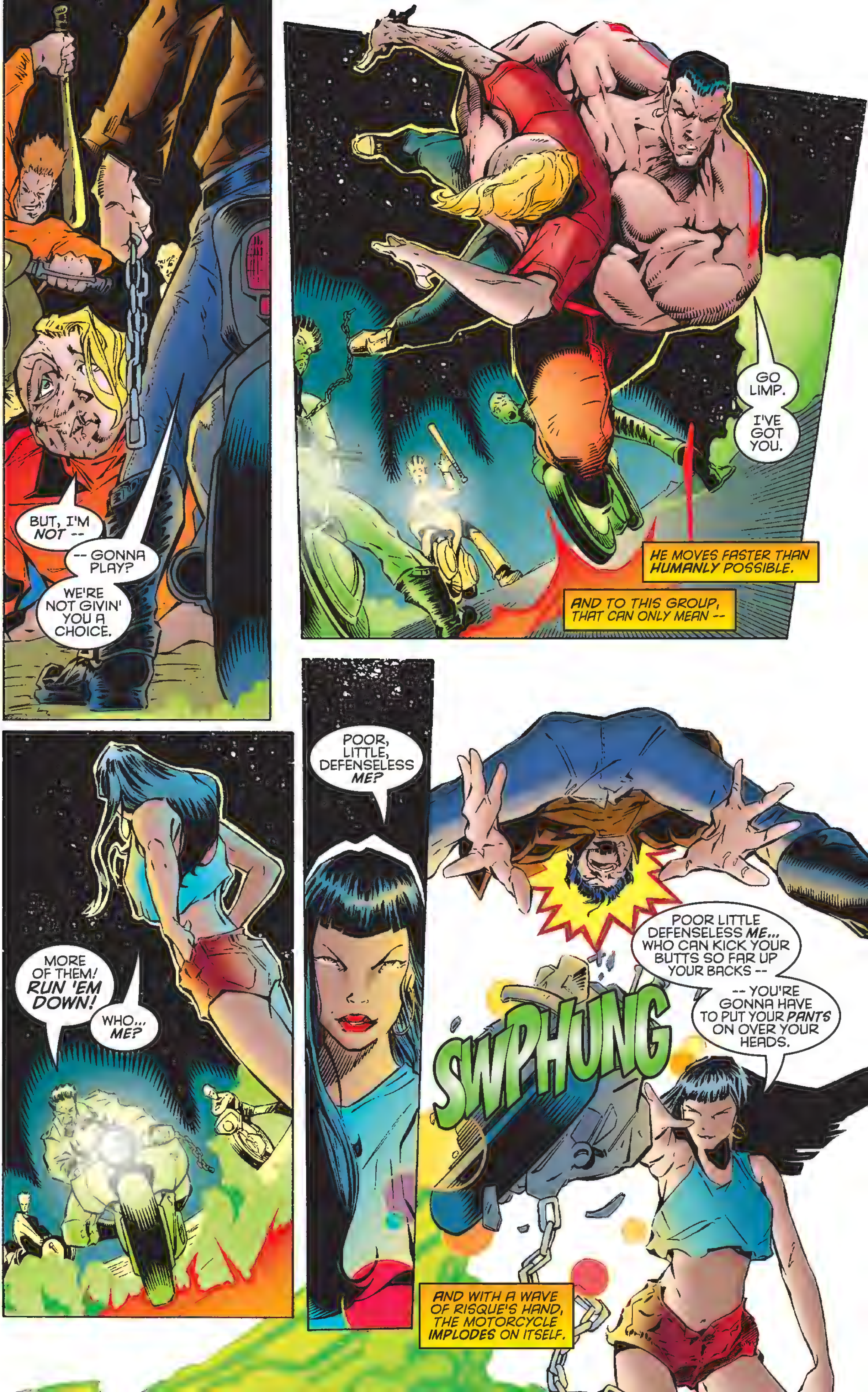

IT IS NEARLY DAWN WHEN THEY ARRIVE.
THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE
"THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE"?
NEAR AS I KIN SORT IT OUT O' ME HEAD, THE PLACE IS RUN BY THIS Dr. WEISMAN WOMAN.
SHE'S A COLLEAGUE OF XAVIER'S AND A MEMBER O' HIS "MUTANT UNDERGROUND" --
-- HUMANS WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO HELP THE MUTANT CAUSE... CLANDESTINELY.
BUT... THERE WAS... SOMEONE ELSE...
'STAR?
'STAR, IS THERE SOMETHIN' WRONG YE'RE NAE TELLIN' ME?
NO.
FOR WHAT COULD THERE POSSIBLY BE WITHIN THESE WALLS THAT COULD BEFALL...
...A WARRIOR BORN?
WELL, JUS' BE CAREFUL.
'TWAS THAT KIND O' ATTITUDE THAT GOT ME IN TROUBLE HERE THE LAST TIME...

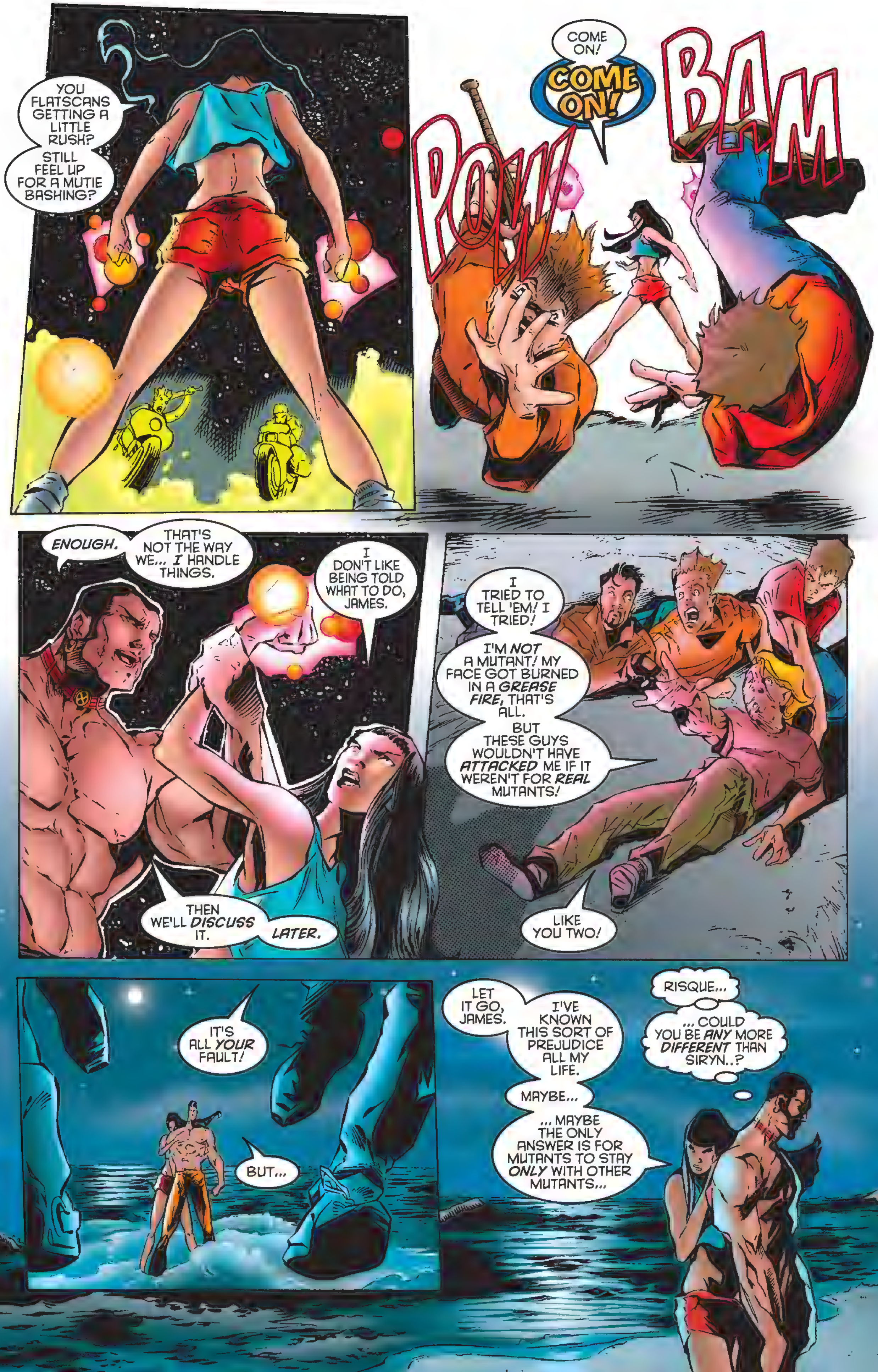

WAS IT NOT OUR PLAN TO HAVE *THEM* COME OUT AND GREET THE AMBULANCE?
IT *WAS.*
BUT AS DOMINO WOULD SAY, *"TIME FOR PLAN B".*
LOCKED.
UNLOCKED.
GET READY, 'STAR.
WE'RE WALKIN' STRAIGHT INTO THE MOUTH O' THE LION...
SHATTER-STAR?
NOW *WHERE* DID HE RUN OFF TO?
CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER...

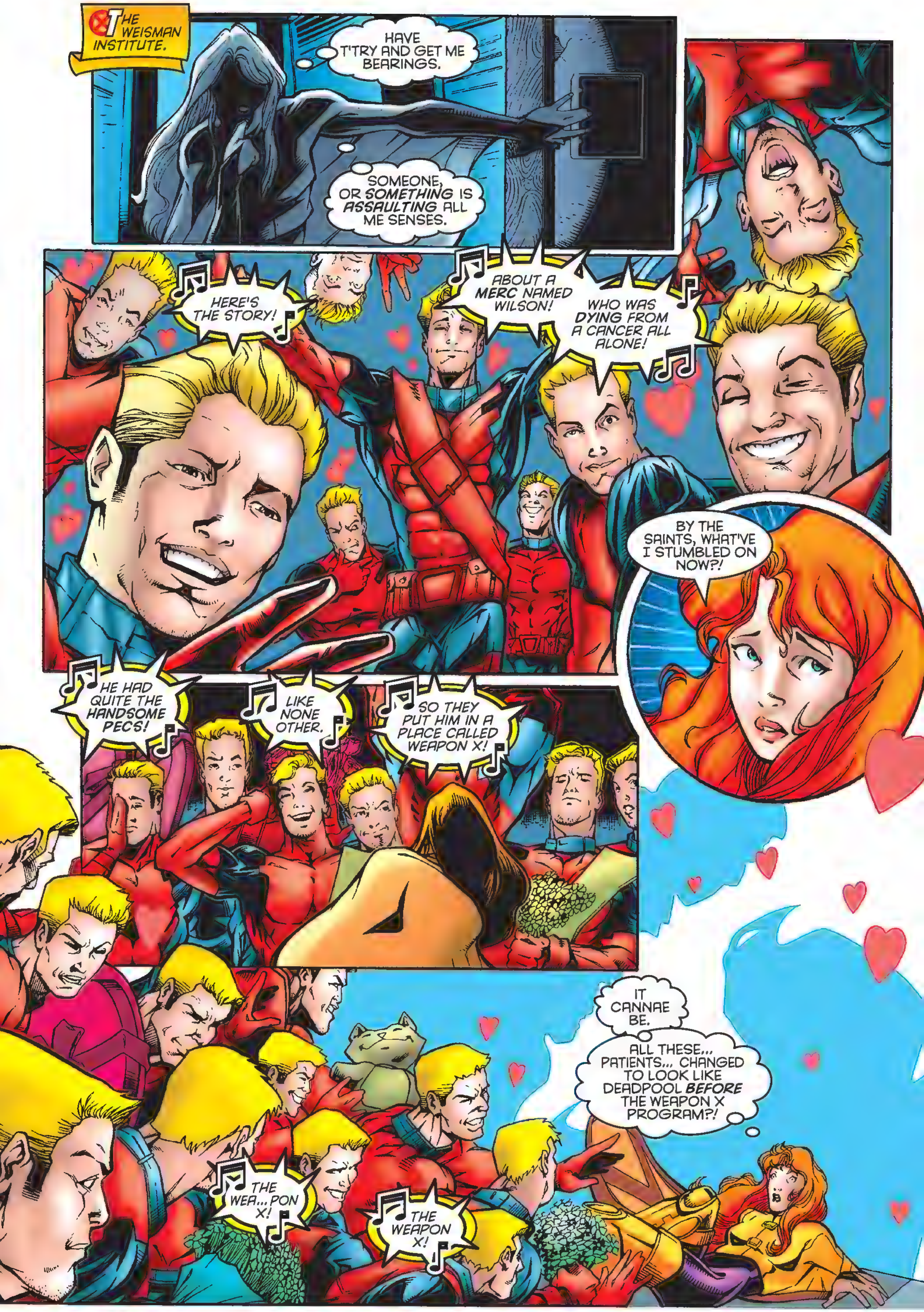

NEARBY...
I DID NOT WISH TO LEAVE SIRYN AS I DID.
BUT, I FIND MY HEAD SWIMMING WITH IMAGES.
OVERWHELMED BY THE FEELING THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS ALL BEFORE.
I HAVE HEARD MELTDOWN USE AN EXPRESSION TO DESCRIBE WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME...
... "DEJA VU."
I... SENSE... THIS IS MORE THAN THAT, THOUGH.
MY WANING WARRIOR'S EDGE...
THAT POLICE REPORT CLAIMING I HAD ANOTHER NAME...
ANOTHER LIFE AS SOMEONE CALLED --
SEE X-FORCE #54 "Let Me Outta Here" - Bob!
WELCOME HOME, BENJAMIN.
THE AFOREMENTIONED Dr. WEISMAN.
AN... UNUSUAL TEN-YEAR OLD PATIENT NAMED JEREMY STEVENS.
AND IN THE SHADOWS... IS THAT... ?
YOU'VE BEEN A VERY BAD BOY.

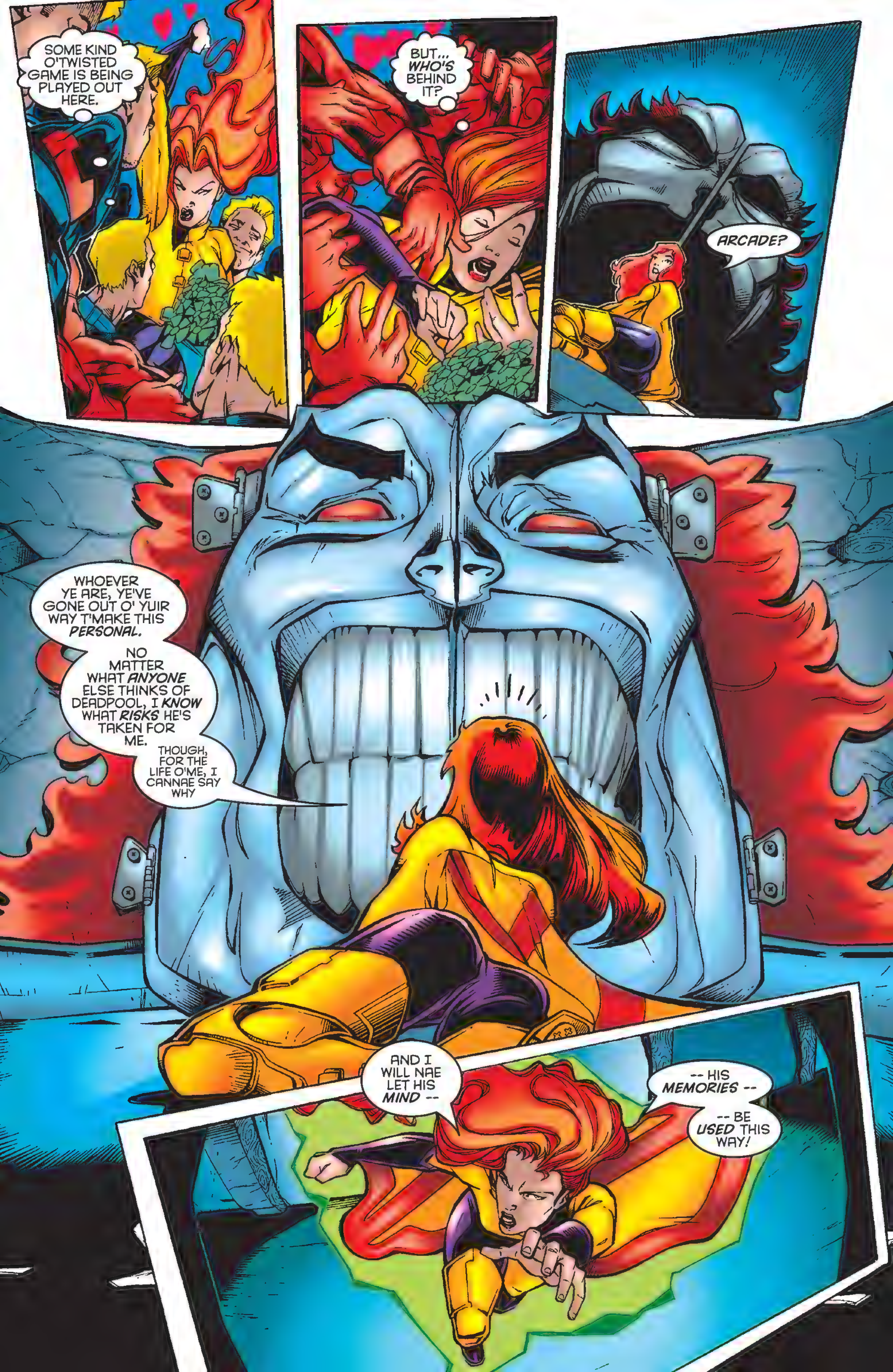

ELSEWHERE, IN THE MAZE OF CORRIDORS INSIDE THE INSTITUTE...
DEADPOOL!!
WADE, WHERE THE DEVIL ARE YE?!
5
SAY THE SECRET WORD AND THE DUCK WILL COME DOWN AND YOU'LL WIN A PRIZE.
5
6
WADE?!
YE SHAN'T BE PLAYIN' GAMES WIT' ME!
I CAME TO GET YE OUT O' HERE AND THERE'S NAE MUCH --
-- TIME?
GONE.
I DINNAE UNDERSTAND.
THE MAN WAS *HERE* A MOMENT AGO.
BUS NINE NOW LEAVING FOR ANAHEIM...
... AZUSA AND CUCAMONGA!
6
WADE! *DEADPOOL!* STOP THIS FOOLISHNESS!
THAT WAY IS A VERY NICE WAY.
IT'S PLEASANT DOWN *THIS* WAY, TOO.
OF COURSE, PEOPLE *DO* GO *BOTH* WAYS.
... MADNESS... !

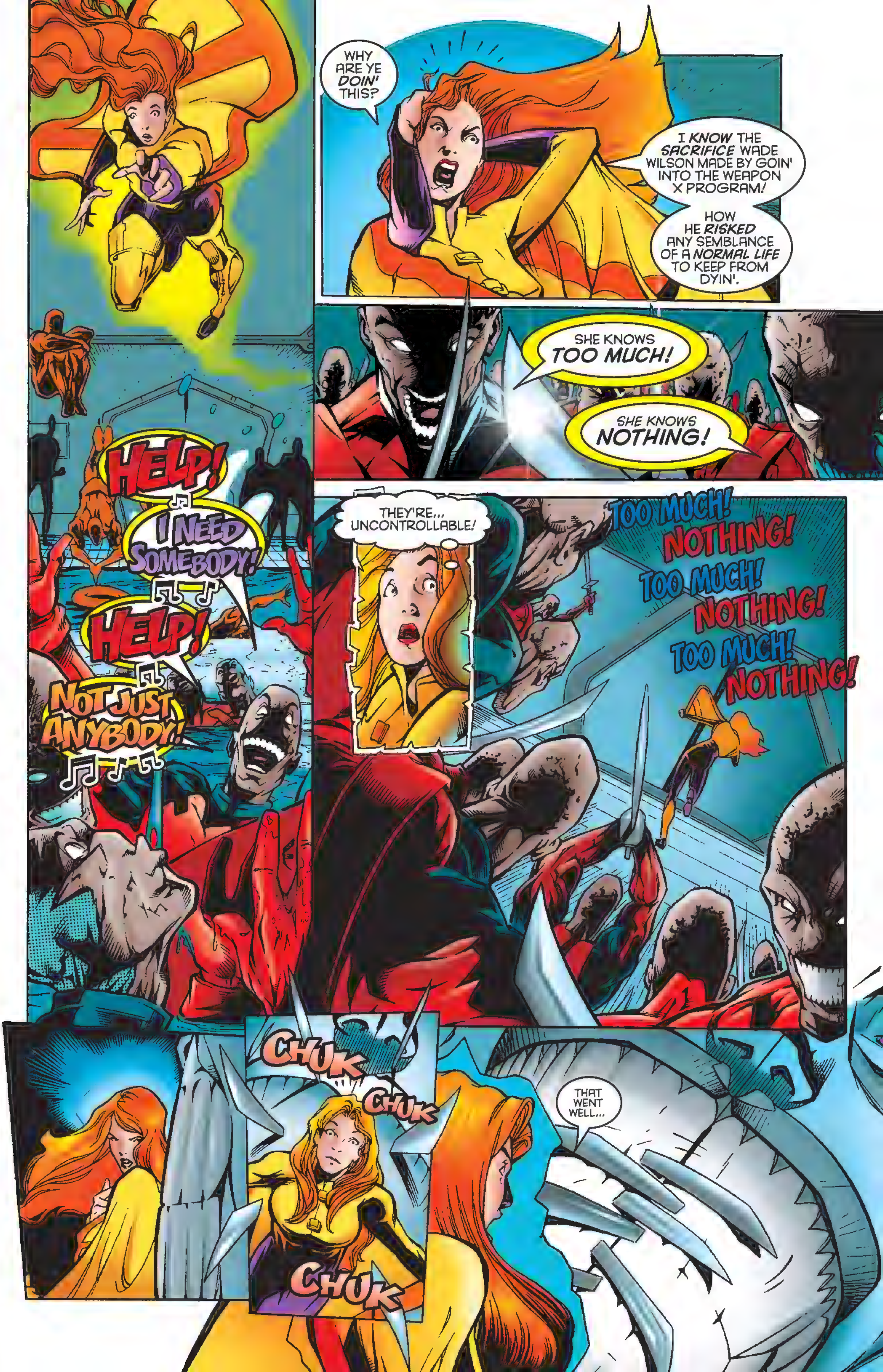

SOUTH BEACH.
I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY, RISQUE.
BUT BEING WITH YOU... IT FEELS *RIGHT*.
I'M NOT ARGUING WITH YOU, JAMES.
SO, DON'T LOOK TO ME FOR --
HELP!
KROOOM
THAT DIDN'T SOUND VERY FAR AWAY.
WHOEVER IT IS, THEIR TIMING *STINKS!*
PLEASE, I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO YOU!
"PLEASE, I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO YOU!"
YOU'RE *HERE*, MUTIE.
AND FOR THE *F.O.H.*, THAT'S ENOUGH.
FRIENDS OF HUMANITY -- A RADICAL ANTI-MUTANT GROUP -- "Time for the little blue pills" -- Bob.
WE'RE GONNA PLAY A LITTLE *BASEBALL*, FREAK.
AND *GUESS* WHO'S GONNA BE THE BALL...

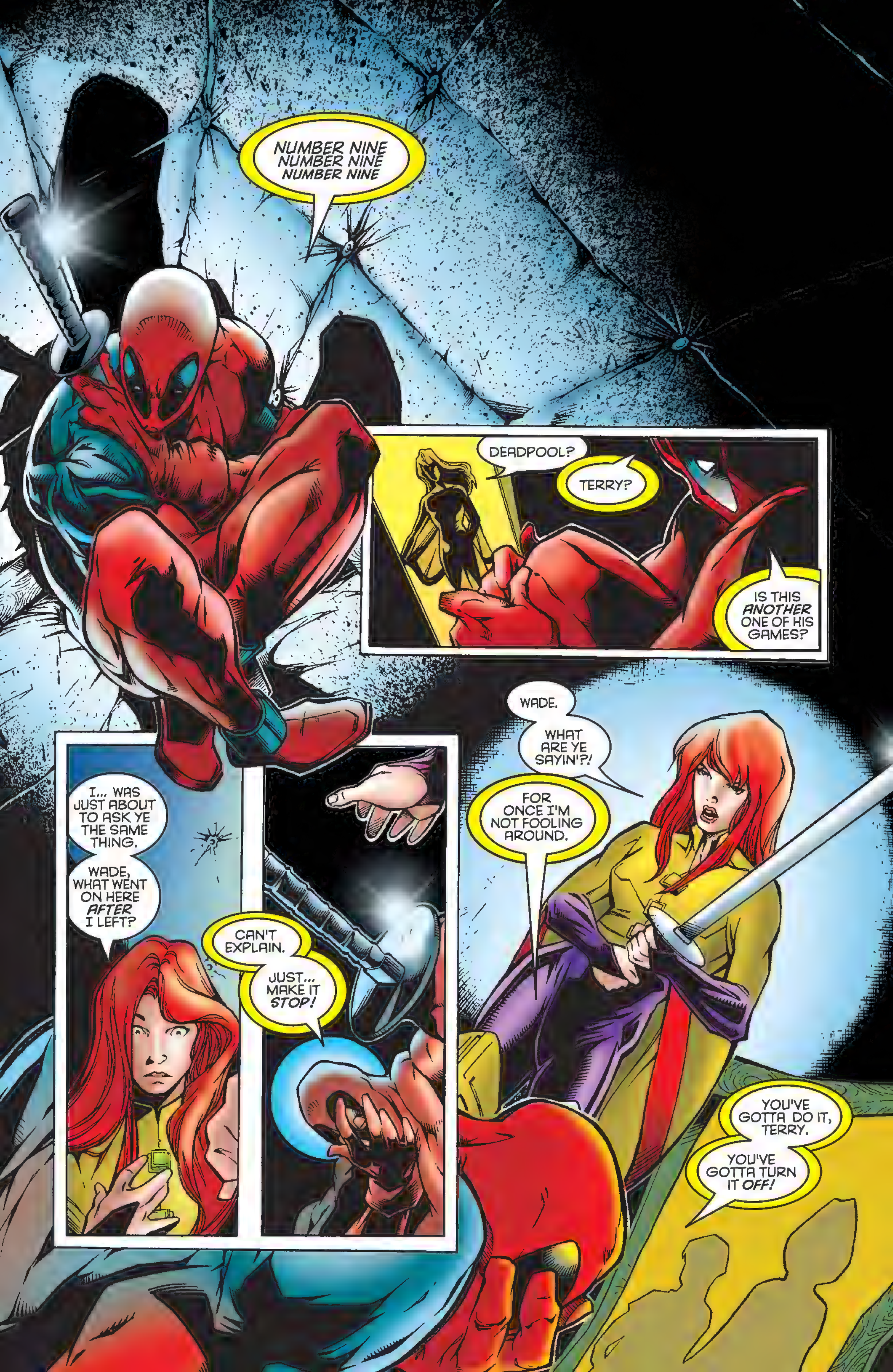

BUT, I'M *NOT* --
-- GONNA PLAY?
WE'RE NOT GIVIN' YOU A CHOICE.
GO LIMP.
I'VE GOT YOU.
HE MOVES FASTER THAN ***HUMANLY*** *POSSIBLE.*
AND TO THIS GROUP, THAT CAN ONLY MEAN --
MORE OF THEM! ***RUN 'EM DOWN!***
WHO... ***ME?***
POOR, LITTLE, DEFENSELESS ***ME?***
POOR LITTLE DEFENSELESS ***ME...*** WHO CAN KICK YOUR BUTTS SO FAR UP YOUR BACKS --
-- YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO PUT YOUR ***PANTS*** ON OVER YOUR HEADS.
SWPHUNG
AND WITH A WAVE OF RISQUE'S HAND, THE MOTORCYCLE ***IMPLODES*** *ON ITSELF.*

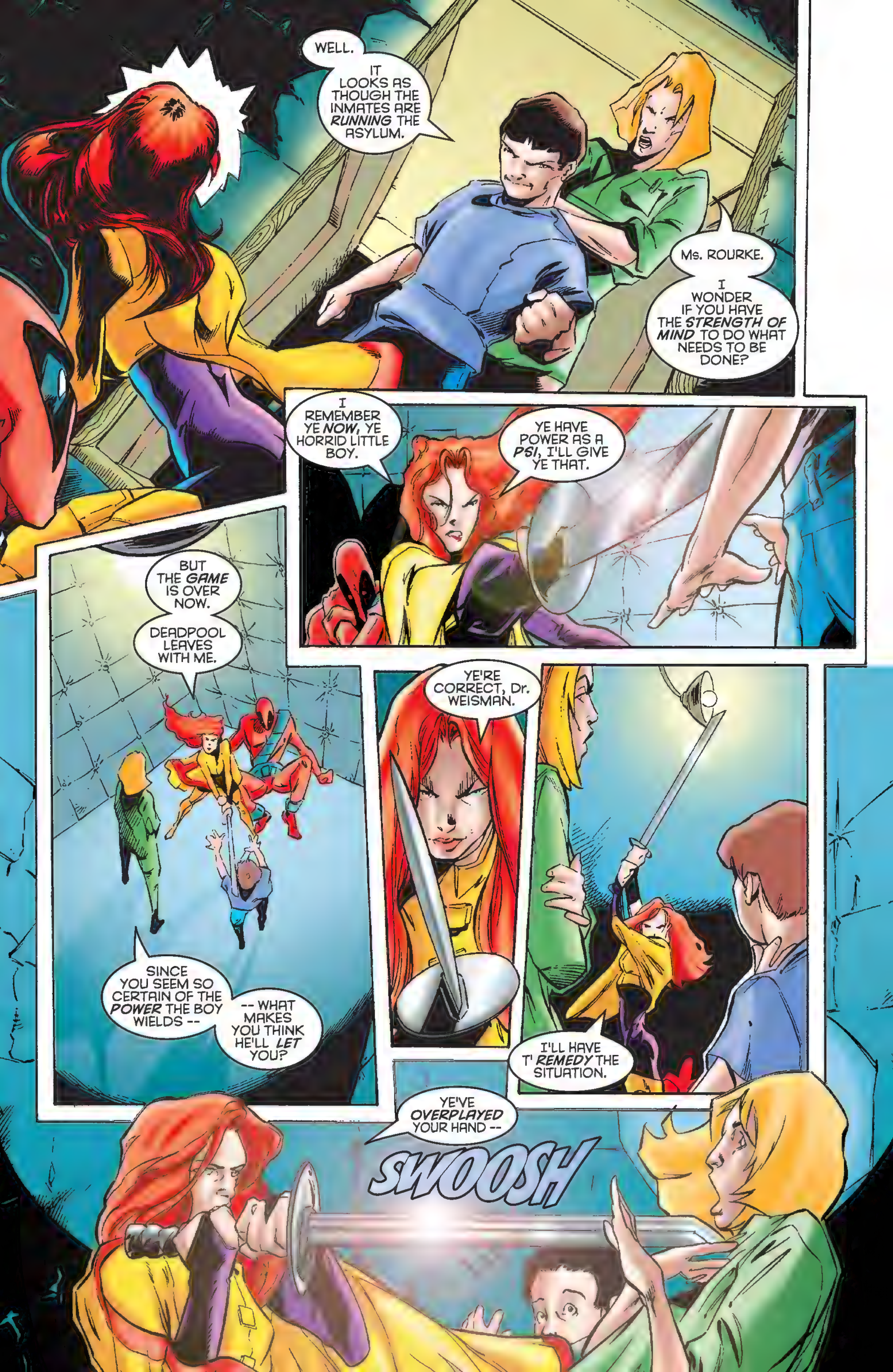

YOU FLATSCANS GETTING A LITTLE RUSH?
STILL FEEL UP FOR A MUTIE BASHING?
COME ON!
COME ON!
POW
BAM
ENOUGH.
THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE... I HANDLE THINGS.
I DON'T LIKE BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO, JAMES.
THEN WE'LL DISCUSS IT.
LATER.
I TRIED TO TELL 'EM! I TRIED!
I'M NOT A MUTANT! MY FACE GOT BURNED IN A GREASE FIRE, THAT'S ALL.
BUT THESE GUYS WOULDN'T HAVE ATTACKED ME IF IT WEREN'T FOR REAL MUTANTS!
LIKE YOU TWO!
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!
BUT...
LET IT GO, JAMES.
I'VE KNOWN THIS SORT OF PREJUDICE ALL MY LIFE.
MAYBE...
...MAYBE THE ONLY ANSWER IS FOR MUTANTS TO STAY ONLY WITH OTHER MUTANTS...
RISQUE...
...COULD YOU BE ANY MORE DIFFERENT THAN SIRYN..?

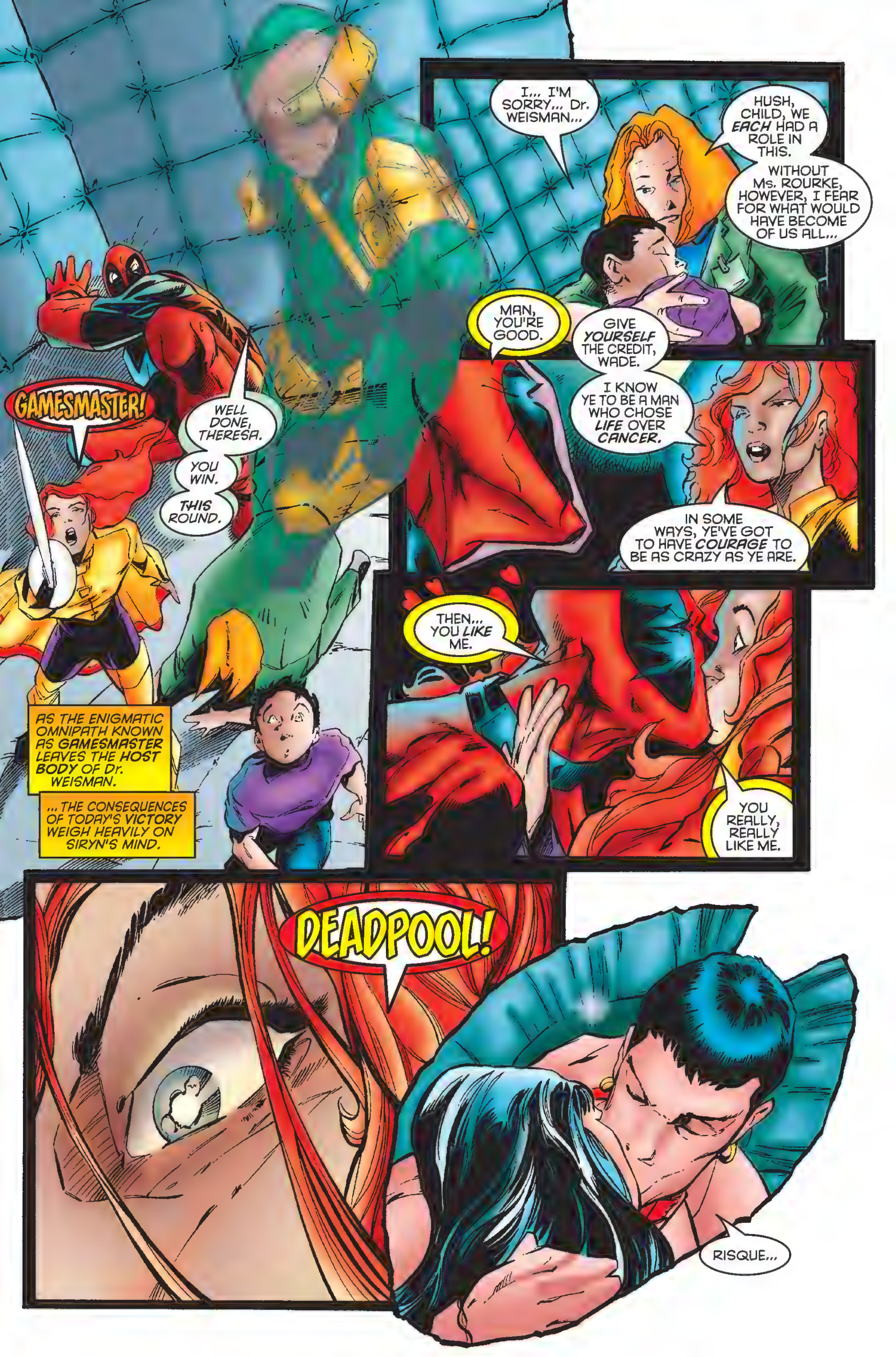

THE WEISMAN INSTITUTE.
HAVE T'TRY AND GET ME BEARINGS.
SOMEONE, OR SOMETHING IS ASSAULTING ALL ME SENSES.
HERE'S THE STORY!
ABOUT A MERC NAMED WILSON!
WHO WAS DYING FROM A CANCER ALL ALONE!
BY THE SAINTS, WHAT'VE I STUMBLED ON NOW?!
HE HAD QUITE THE HANDSOME PECS!
LIKE NONE OTHER.
SO THEY PUT HIM IN A PLACE CALLED WEAPON X!
IT CANNAE BE.
ALL THESE... PATIENTS... CHANGED TO LOOK LIKE DEADPOOL BEFORE THE WEAPON X PROGRAM?!
THE WEA...PON X!
THE WEAPON X!

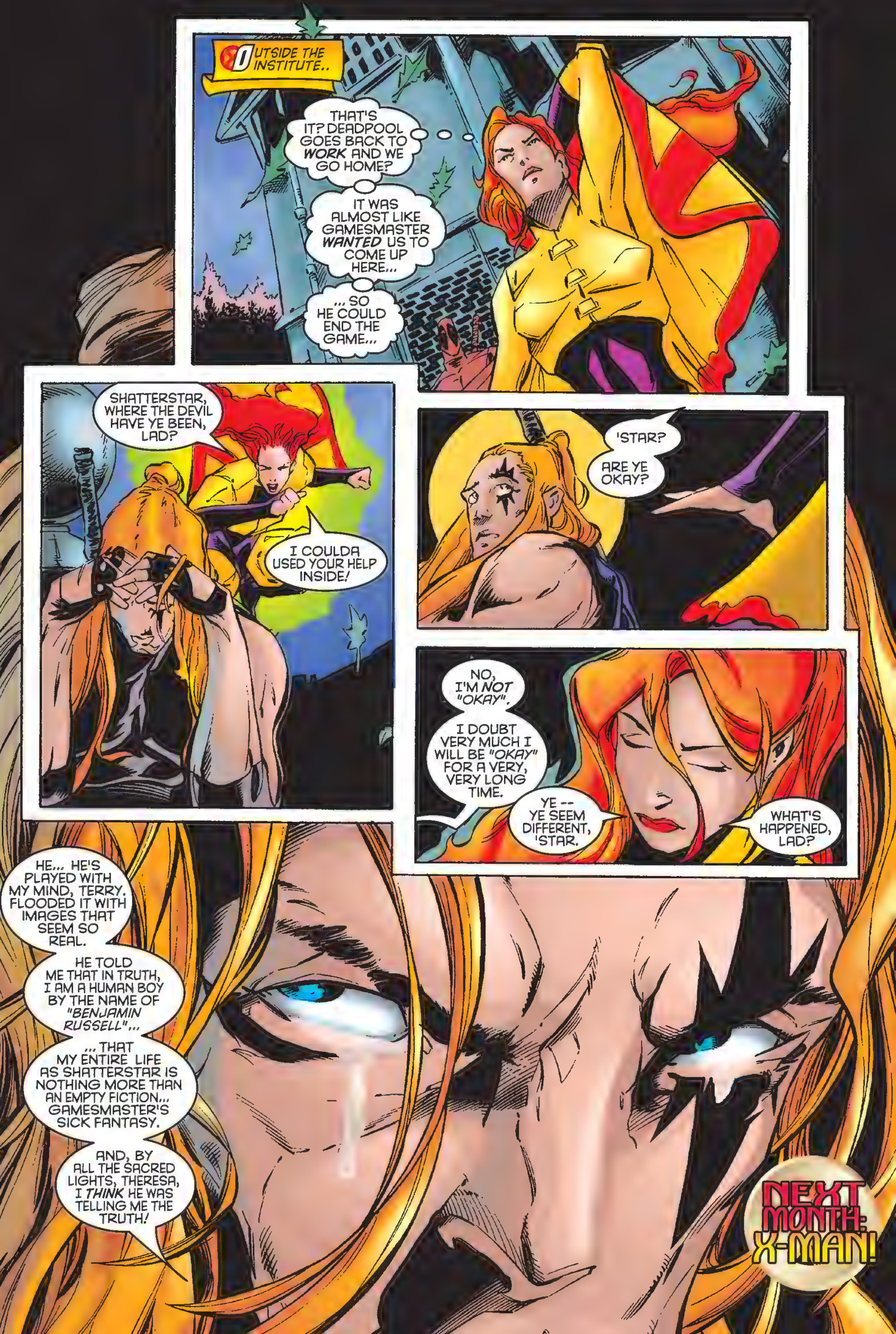

SOME KIND O'TWISTED GAME IS BEING PLAYED OUT HERE.
BUT... *WHO'S* BEHIND IT?
ARCADE?
WHOEVER YE ARE, YE'VE GONE OUT O' YUIR WAY T'MAKE THIS *PERSONAL.*
NO MATTER WHAT *ANYONE* ELSE THINKS OF DEADPOOL, I *KNOW* WHAT *RISKS* HE'S TAKEN FOR ME.
THOUGH, FOR THE LIFE O'ME, I CANNAE SAY WHY
AND I WILL NAE LET HIS *MIND* --
-- HIS *MEMORIES* --
-- BE *USED* THIS WAY!

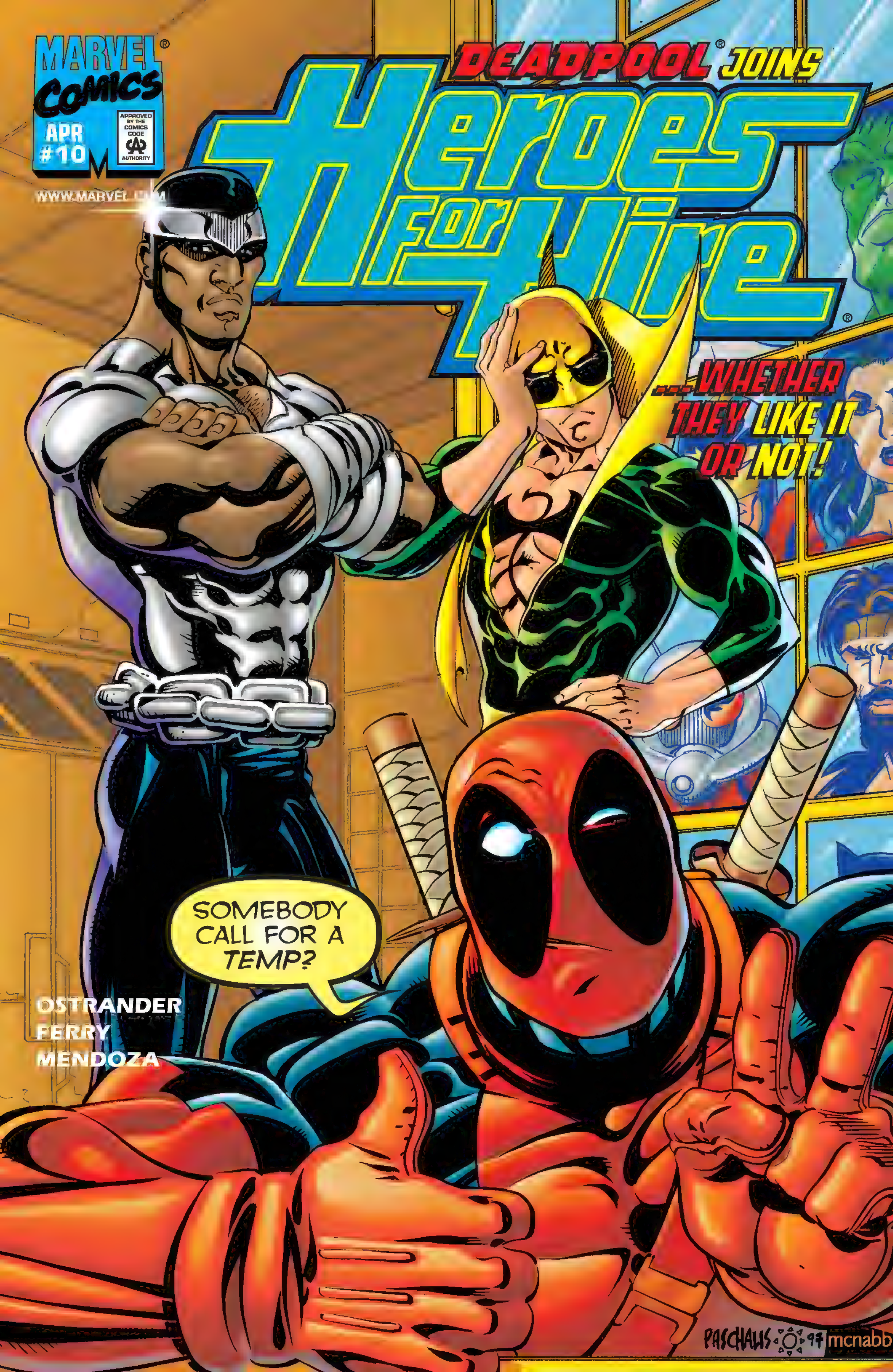

WHY ARE YE *DOIN'* THIS?
I *KNOW* THE *SACRIFICE* WADE WILSON MADE BY GOIN' INTO THE WEAPON X PROGRAM!
HOW HE *RISKED* ANY SEMBLANCE OF A *NORMAL LIFE* TO KEEP FROM DYIN'.
HELP!
I NEED SOMEBODY!
HELP!
NOT JUST ANYBODY!
SHE KNOWS *TOO MUCH!*
SHE KNOWS *NOTHING!*
THEY'RE... UNCONTROLLABLE!
TOO MUCH!
NOTHING!
TOO MUCH!
NOTHING!
TOO MUCH!
NOTHING!
CHUK
CHUK
CHUK
THAT WENT WELL...


NUMBER NINE
NUMBER NINE
NUMBER NINE
DEADPOOL?
TERRY?
IS THIS *ANOTHER* ONE OF HIS GAMES?
WADE.
WHAT ARE YE SAYIN'?!
FOR ONCE I'M NOT FOOLING AROUND.
I... WAS JUST ABOUT TO ASK YE THE SAME THING.
WADE, WHAT WENT ON HERE *AFTER* I LEFT?
CAN'T EXPLAIN.
JUST... MAKE IT *STOP!*
YOU'VE GOTTA DO IT, TERRY.
YOU'VE GOTTA TURN IT *OFF!*


WELL.
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE INMATES ARE *RUNNING* THE ASYLUM.
Ms. ROURKE.
I WONDER IF YOU HAVE THE ***STRENGTH OF MIND*** TO DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?
I REMEMBER YE *NOW*, YE HORRID LITTLE BOY.
YE HAVE POWER AS A ***PSI***, I'LL GIVE YE THAT.
BUT THE ***GAME*** IS OVER NOW.
DEADPOOL LEAVES WITH ME.
SINCE YOU SEEM SO CERTAIN OF THE ***POWER*** THE BOY WIELDS --
-- WHAT MAKES YOU THINK HE'LL ***LET*** YOU?
YE'RE CORRECT, Dr. WEISMAN.
I'LL HAVE T' ***REMEDY*** THE SITUATION.
YE'VE ***OVERPLAYED*** YOUR HAND --
SWOOSH


GAMESMASTER!
WELL DONE, THERESA.
YOU WIN.
THIS ROUND.
AS THE ENIGMATIC OMNIPATH KNOWN AS GAMESMASTER LEAVES THE HOST BODY OF Dr. WEISMAN.
...THE CONSEQUENCES OF TODAY'S VICTORY WEIGH HEAVILY ON SIRYN'S MIND.
I... I'M SORRY... Dr. WEISMAN...
HUSH, CHILD, WE EACH HAD A ROLE IN THIS.
WITHOUT Ms. ROURKE, HOWEVER, I FEAR FOR WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME OF US ALL...
MAN, YOU'RE GOOD.
GIVE YOURSELF THE CREDIT, WADE.
I KNOW YE TO BE A MAN WHO CHOSE LIFE OVER CANCER.
IN SOME WAYS, YE'VE GOT TO HAVE COURAGE TO BE AS CRAZY AS YE ARE.
THEN... YOU LIKE ME.
YOU REALLY, REALLY LIKE ME.
DEADPOOL!
RISQUE...


OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTE..
THAT'S IT? DEADPOOL GOES BACK TO *WORK* AND WE GO HOME?
IT WAS ALMOST LIKE GAMESMASTER *WANTED* US TO COME UP HERE...
...SO HE COULD END THE GAME...
SHATTERSTAR, WHERE THE DEVIL HAVE YE BEEN, LAD?
I COULDA USED YOUR HELP INSIDE!
'STAR?
ARE YE OKAY?
NO, I'M *NOT* "OKAY".
I DOUBT VERY MUCH I WILL BE *"OKAY"* FOR A VERY, VERY LONG TIME.
YE -- YE SEEM DIFFERENT, 'STAR.
WHAT'S HAPPENED, LAD?
HE... HE'S PLAYED WITH MY MIND, TERRY. FLOODED IT WITH IMAGES THAT SEEM SO REAL.
HE TOLD ME THAT IN TRUTH, I AM A HUMAN BOY BY THE NAME OF *"BENJAMIN RUSSELL"*...
...THAT MY ENTIRE LIFE AS SHATTERSTAR IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN EMPTY FICTION... GAMESMASTER'S SICK FANTASY.
AND, BY ALL THE SACRED LIGHTS, THERESA, I *THINK* HE WAS TELLING ME THE TRUTH!
NEXT MONTH: X-MAN!


MARVEL COMICS
APR #10
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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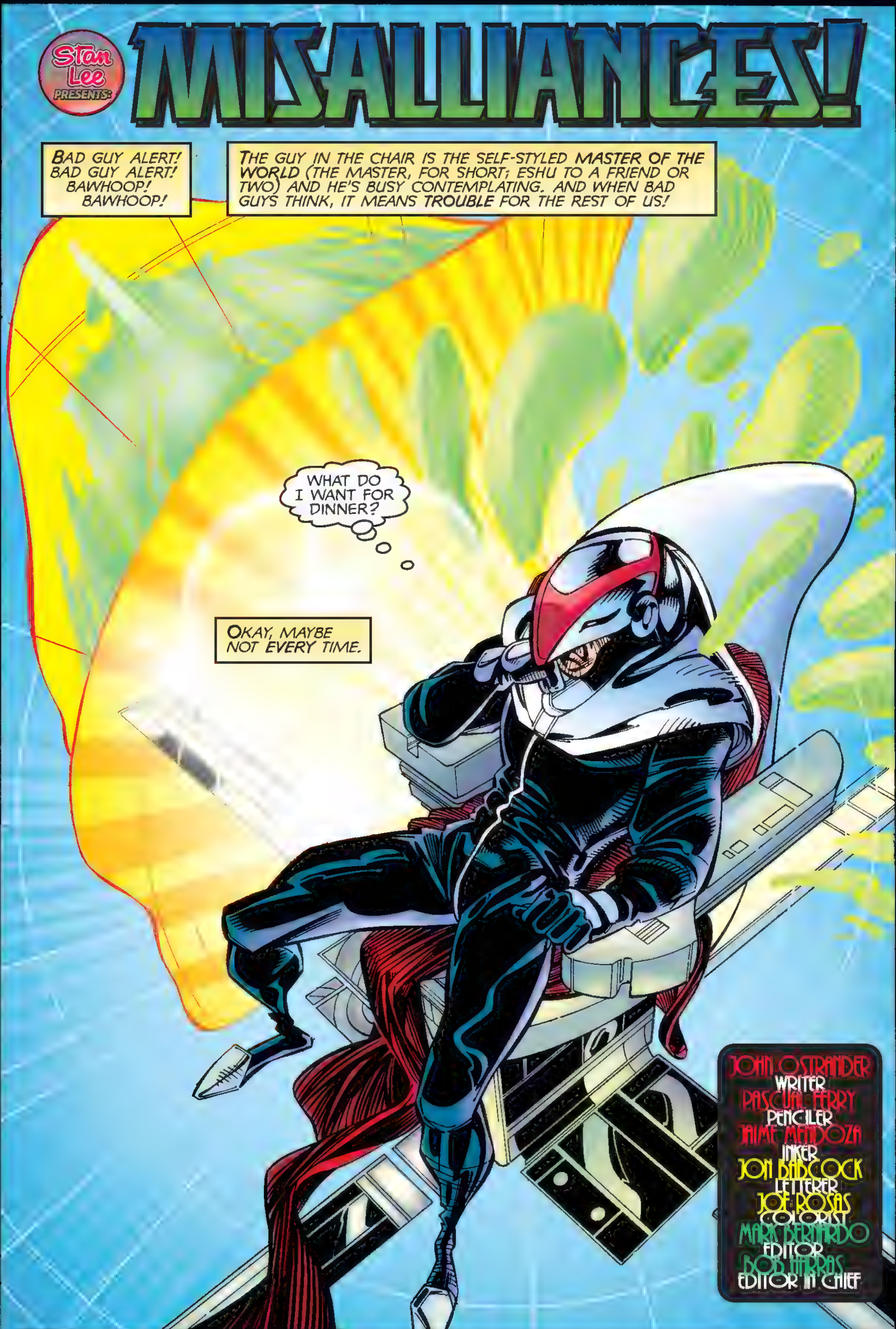
DEADPOOL JOINS
Heroes for Hire
...WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT!
SOMEBODY CALL FOR A TEMP?
OSTRANDER
FERRY
MENDOZA
PASCHALIS 97 mcnabb


Stan Lee PRESENTS:
MISALLIANCES!
BAD GUY ALERT! BAD GUY ALERT! BAWHOOP! BAWHOOP!
THE GUY IN THE CHAIR IS THE SELF-STYLED MASTER OF THE WORLD (THE MASTER, FOR SHORT; ESHU TO A FRIEND OR TWO) AND HE'S BUSY CONTEMPLATING. AND WHEN BAD GUYS THINK, IT MEANS TROUBLE FOR THE REST OF US!
WHAT DO I WANT FOR DINNER?
OKAY, MAYBE NOT EVERY TIME.
JOHN OSTRANDER WRITER
PASCUAL FERRY PENCILER
JAIME MENDOZA INKER
JON BABCOCK LETTERER
JOE ROSAS COLORIST
MARK BERNARDO EDITOR
BOB HARRAS EDITOR IN CHIEF

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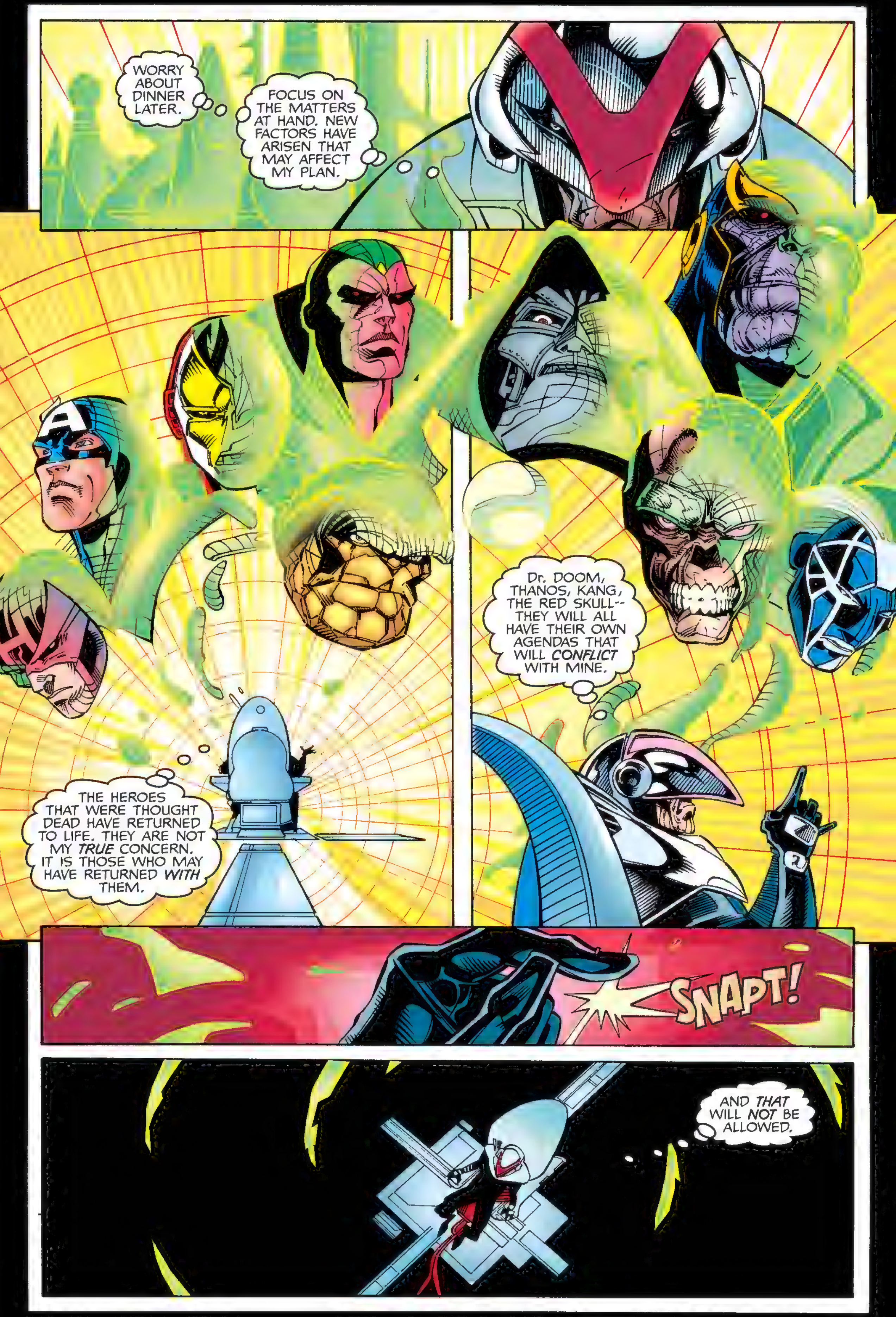
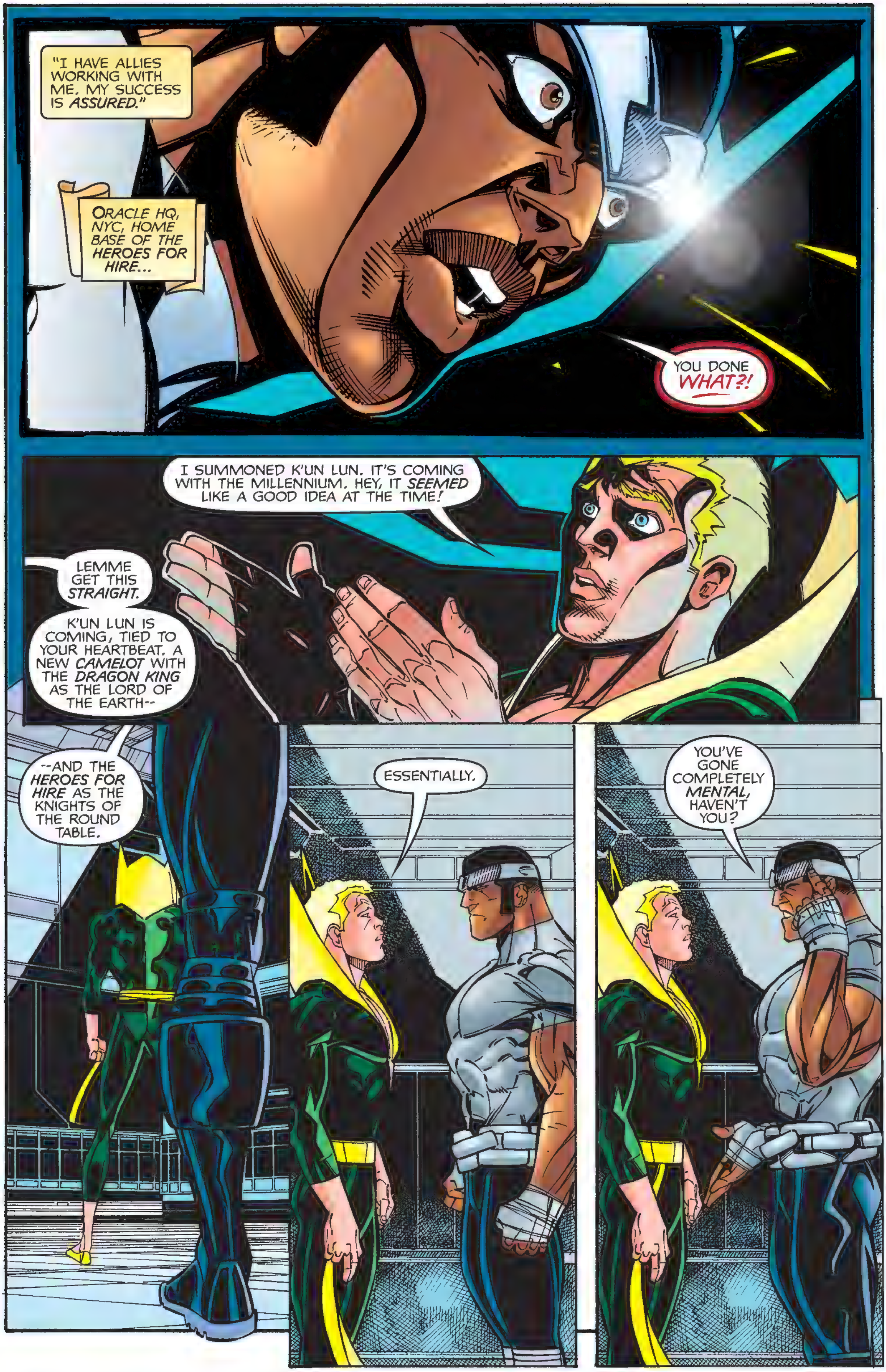
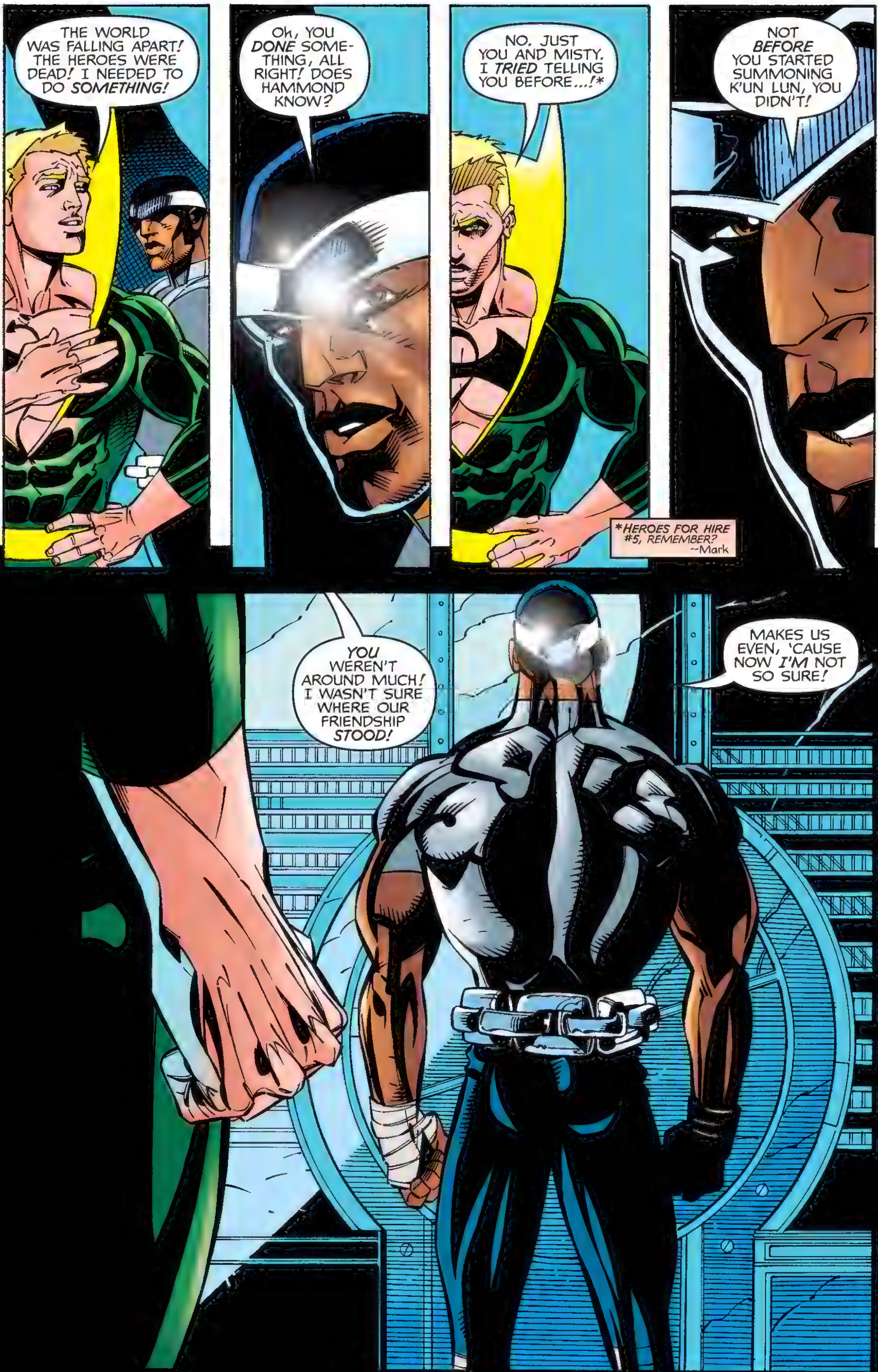
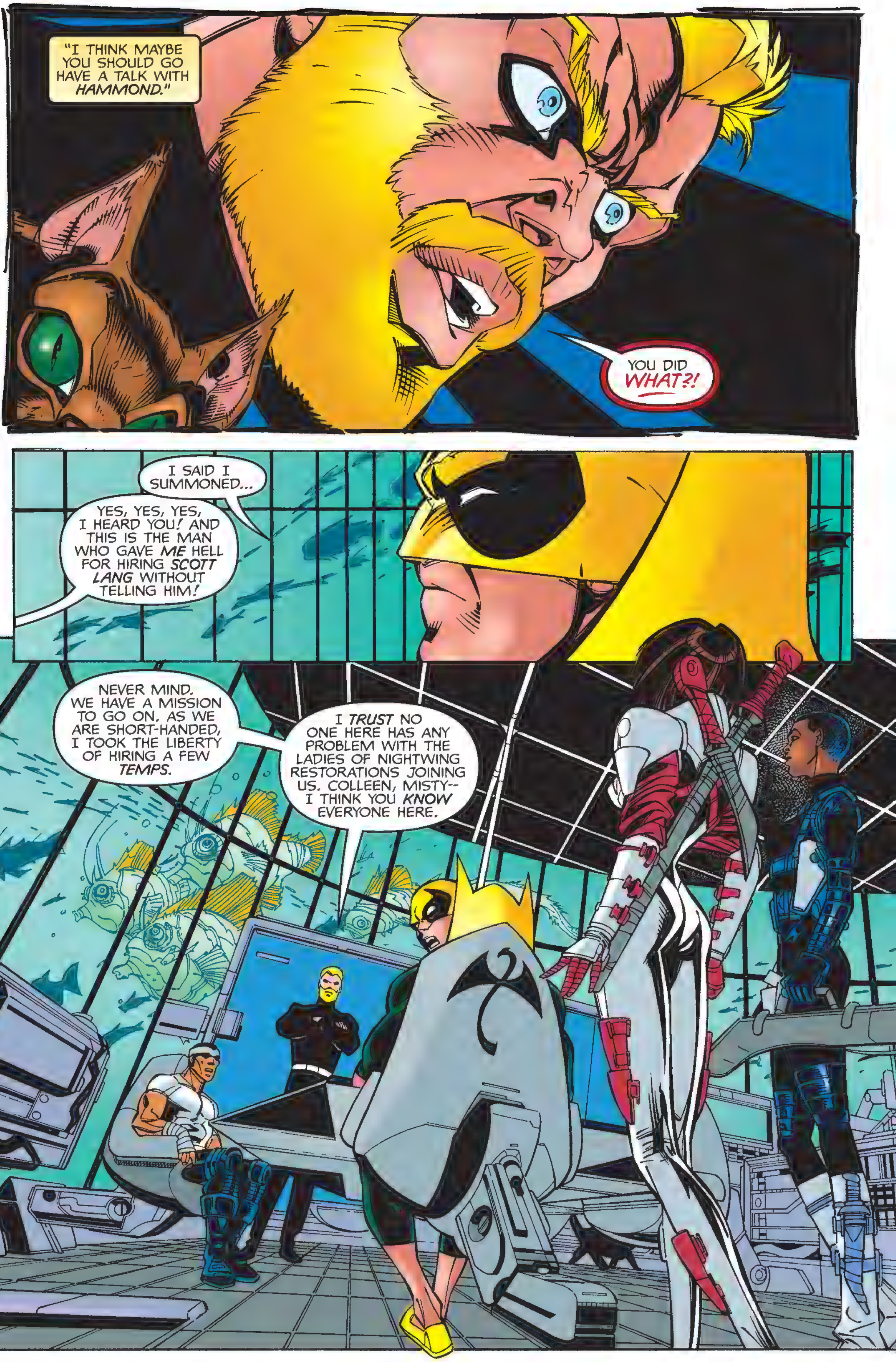
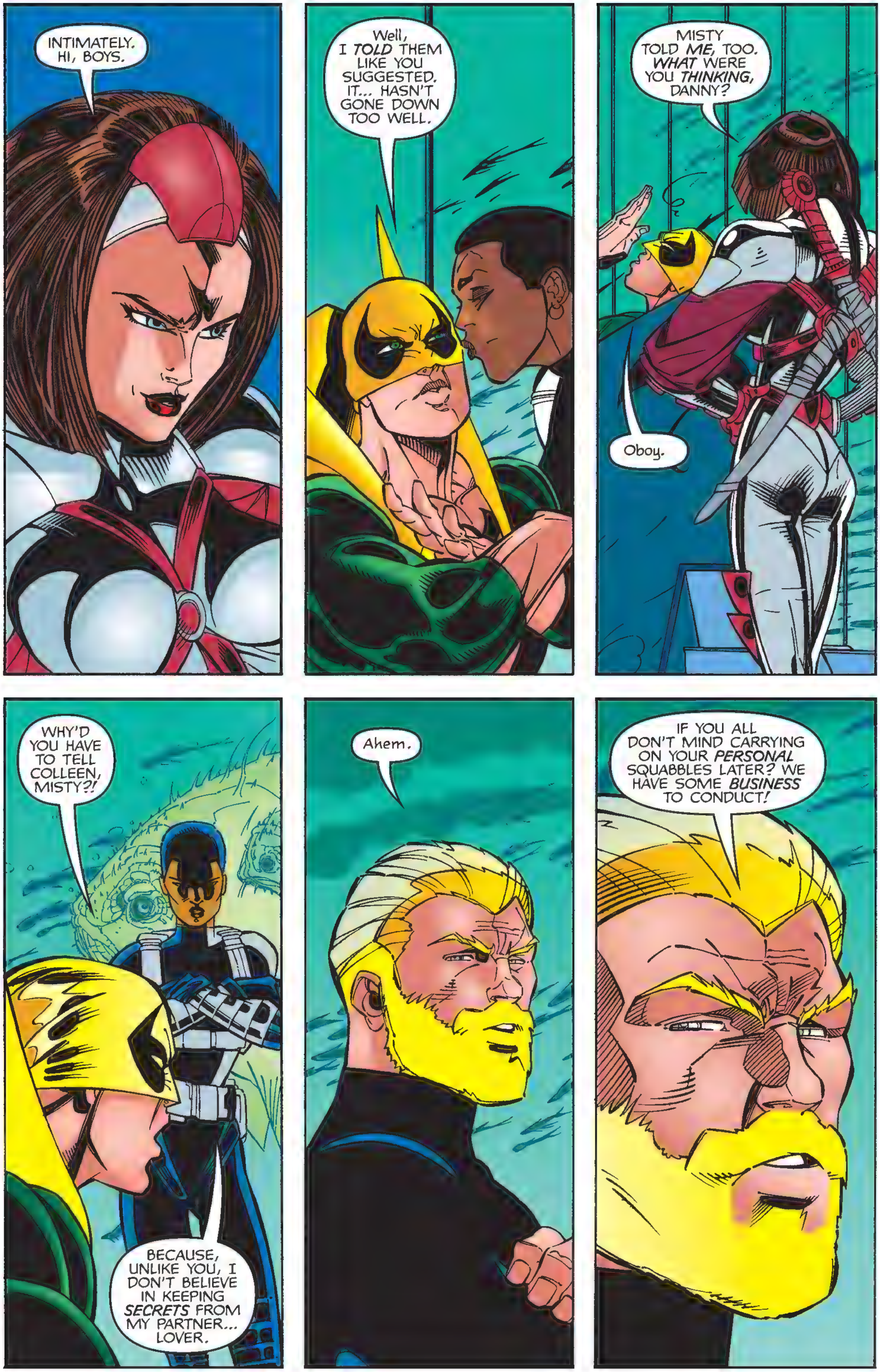
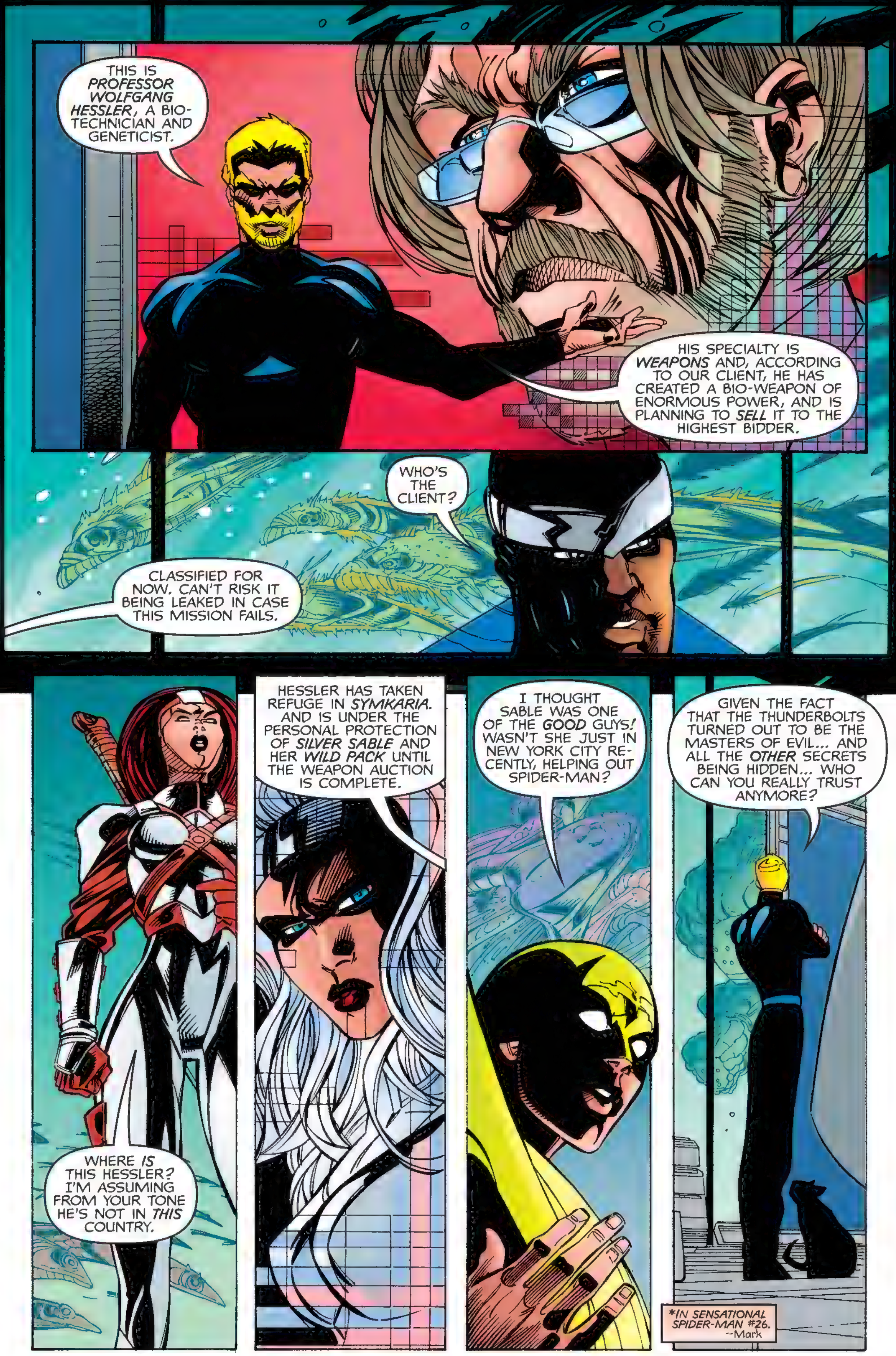

WORRY ABOUT DINNER LATER.
FOCUS ON THE MATTERS AT HAND. NEW FACTORS HAVE ARISEN THAT MAY AFFECT MY PLAN.
THE HEROES THAT WERE THOUGHT DEAD HAVE RETURNED TO LIFE. THEY ARE NOT MY *TRUE* CONCERN. IT IS THOSE WHO MAY HAVE RETURNED *WITH* THEM.
Dr. DOOM, THANOS, KANG, THE RED SKULL-- THEY WILL ALL HAVE THEIR OWN AGENDAS THAT WILL *CONFLICT* WITH MINE.
SNAPT!
AND *THAT* WILL *NOT* BE ALLOWED.

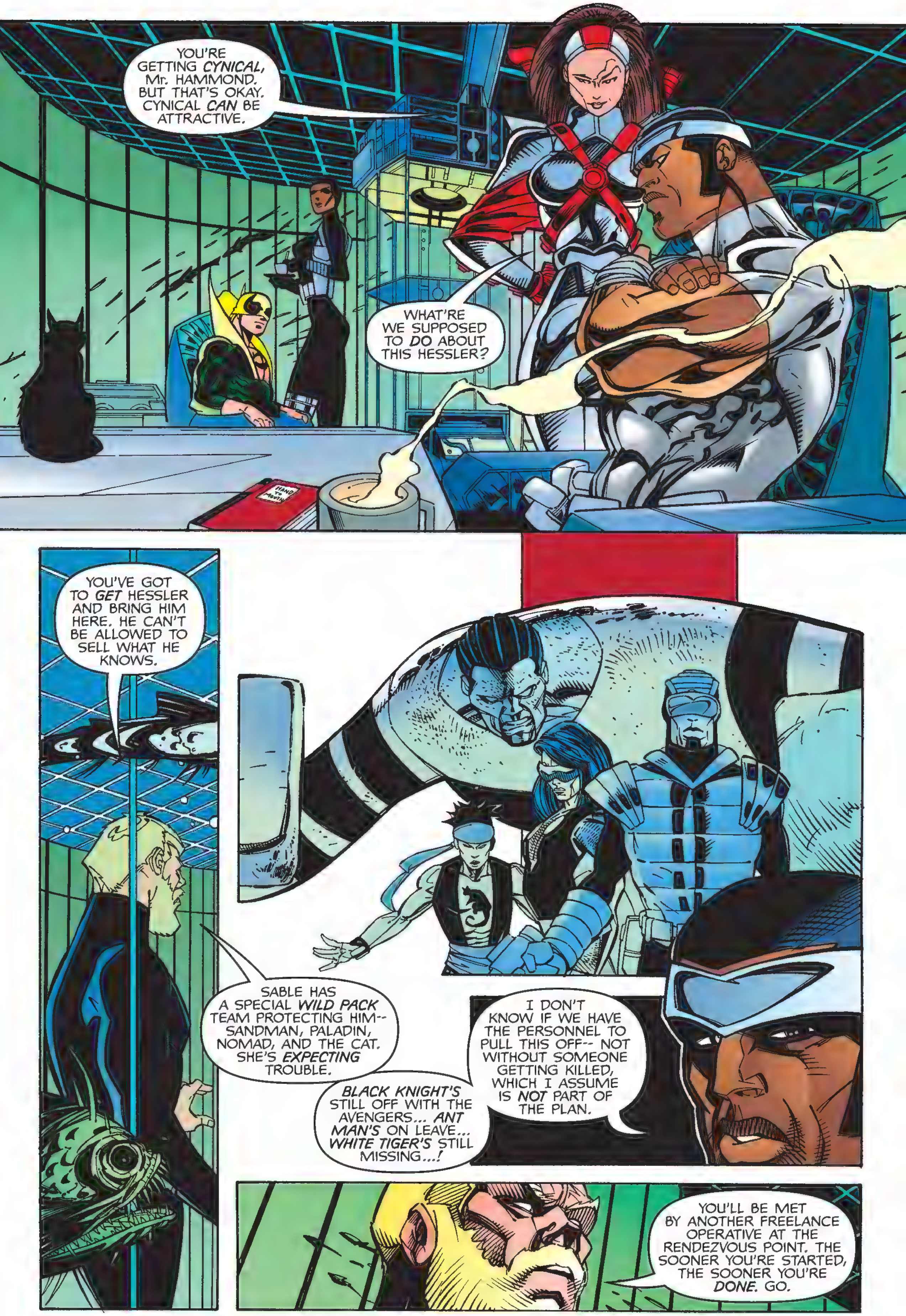

"I HAVE ALLIES WORKING WITH ME. MY SUCCESS IS *ASSURED.*"
ORACLE HQ, NYC, HOME BASE OF THE HEROES FOR HIRE...
YOU DONE *WHAT?!*
I SUMMONED K'UN LUN. IT'S COMING WITH THE MILLENNIUM. HEY, IT *SEEMED* LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME!
LEMME GET THIS *STRAIGHT.*
K'UN LUN IS COMING, TIED TO YOUR HEARTBEAT. A NEW *CAMELOT* WITH THE *DRAGON KING* AS THE LORD OF THE EARTH--
--AND THE *HEROES FOR HIRE* AS THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.
ESSENTIALLY.
YOU'VE GONE COMPLETELY *MENTAL,* HAVEN'T YOU?

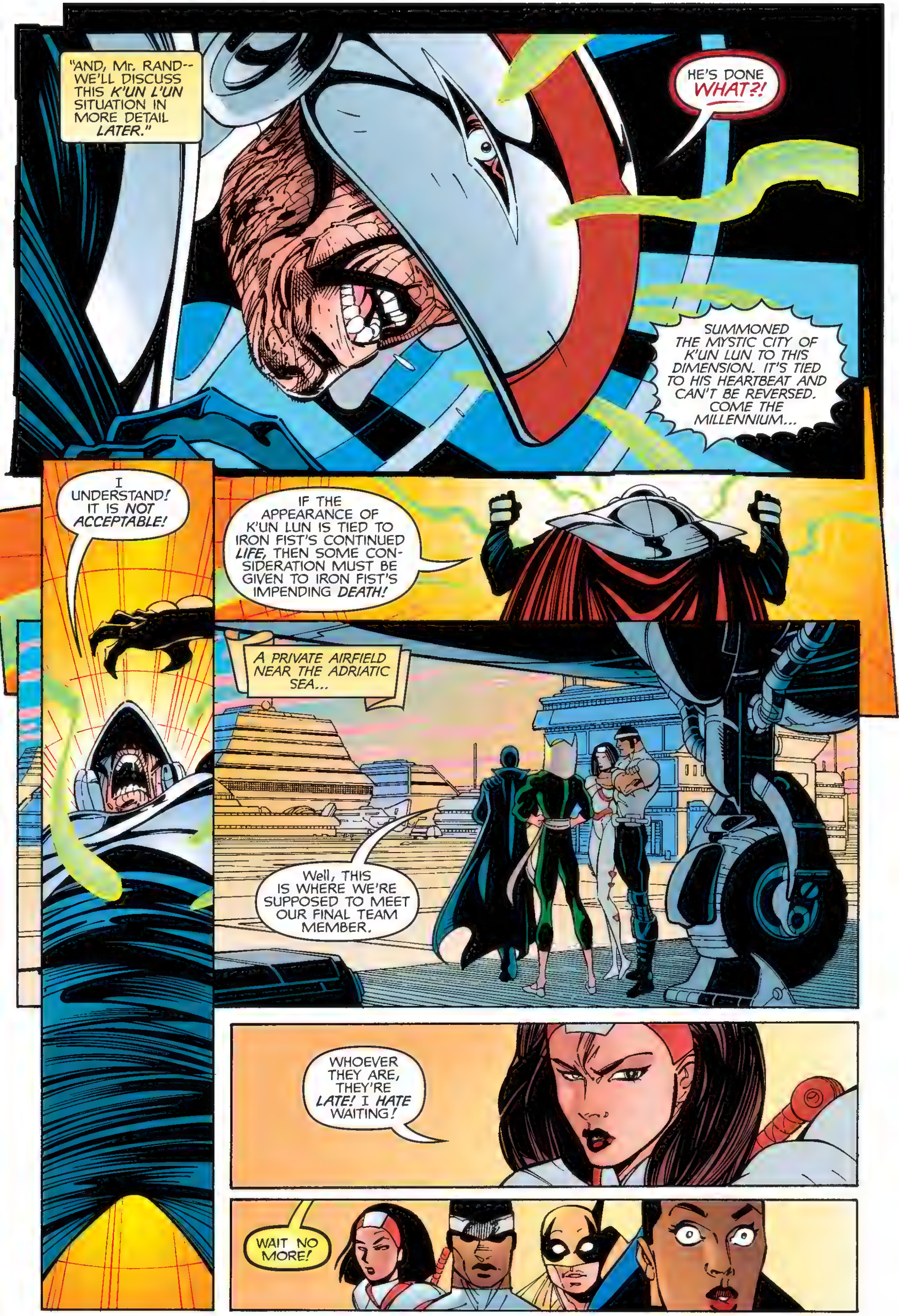

THE WORLD WAS FALLING APART! THE HEROES WERE DEAD! I NEEDED TO DO *SOMETHING!*
OH, YOU *DONE* SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT! DOES HAMMOND KNOW?
NO. JUST YOU AND MISTY. I *TRIED* TELLING YOU BEFORE...!*
*HEROES FOR HIRE #5, REMEMBER? --Mark
NOT *BEFORE* YOU STARTED SUMMONING K'UN LUN, YOU DIDN'T!
YOU WEREN'T AROUND MUCH! I WASN'T SURE WHERE OUR FRIENDSHIP *STOOD!*
MAKES US EVEN, 'CAUSE NOW *I'M* NOT SO SURE!

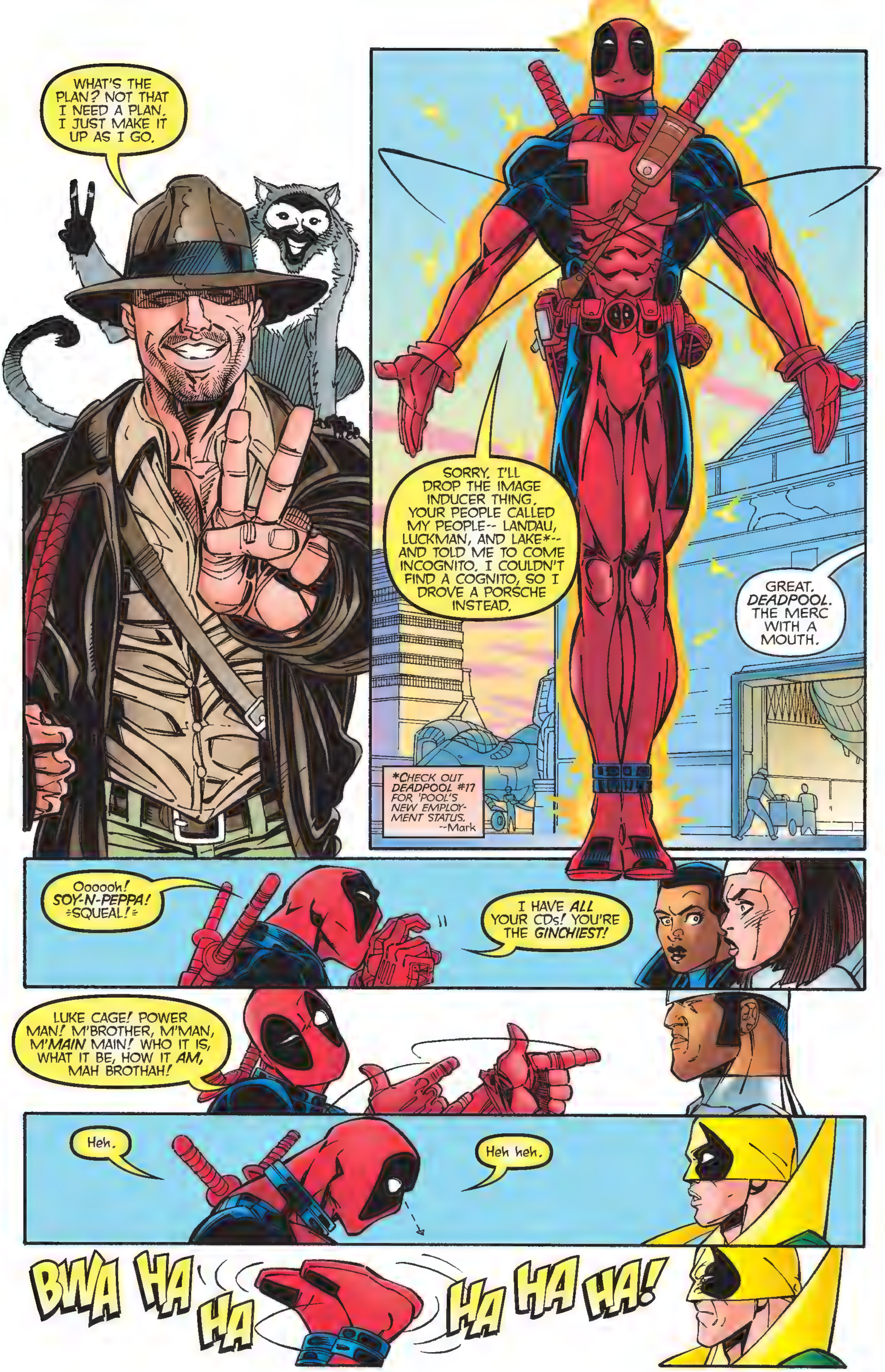

"I THINK MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO HAVE A TALK WITH *HAMMOND.*"
YOU DID *WHAT?!*
I SAID I SUMMONED...
YES, YES, YES, I HEARD YOU*!* AND THIS IS THE MAN WHO GAVE *ME* HELL FOR HIRING *SCOTT LANG* WITHOUT TELLING HIM*!*
NEVER MIND. WE HAVE A MISSION TO GO ON. AS WE ARE SHORT-HANDED, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF HIRING A FEW *TEMPS.*
I *TRUST* NO ONE HERE HAS ANY PROBLEM WITH THE LADIES OF NIGHTWING RESTORATIONS JOINING US. COLLEEN, MISTY-- I THINK YOU *KNOW* EVERYONE HERE.

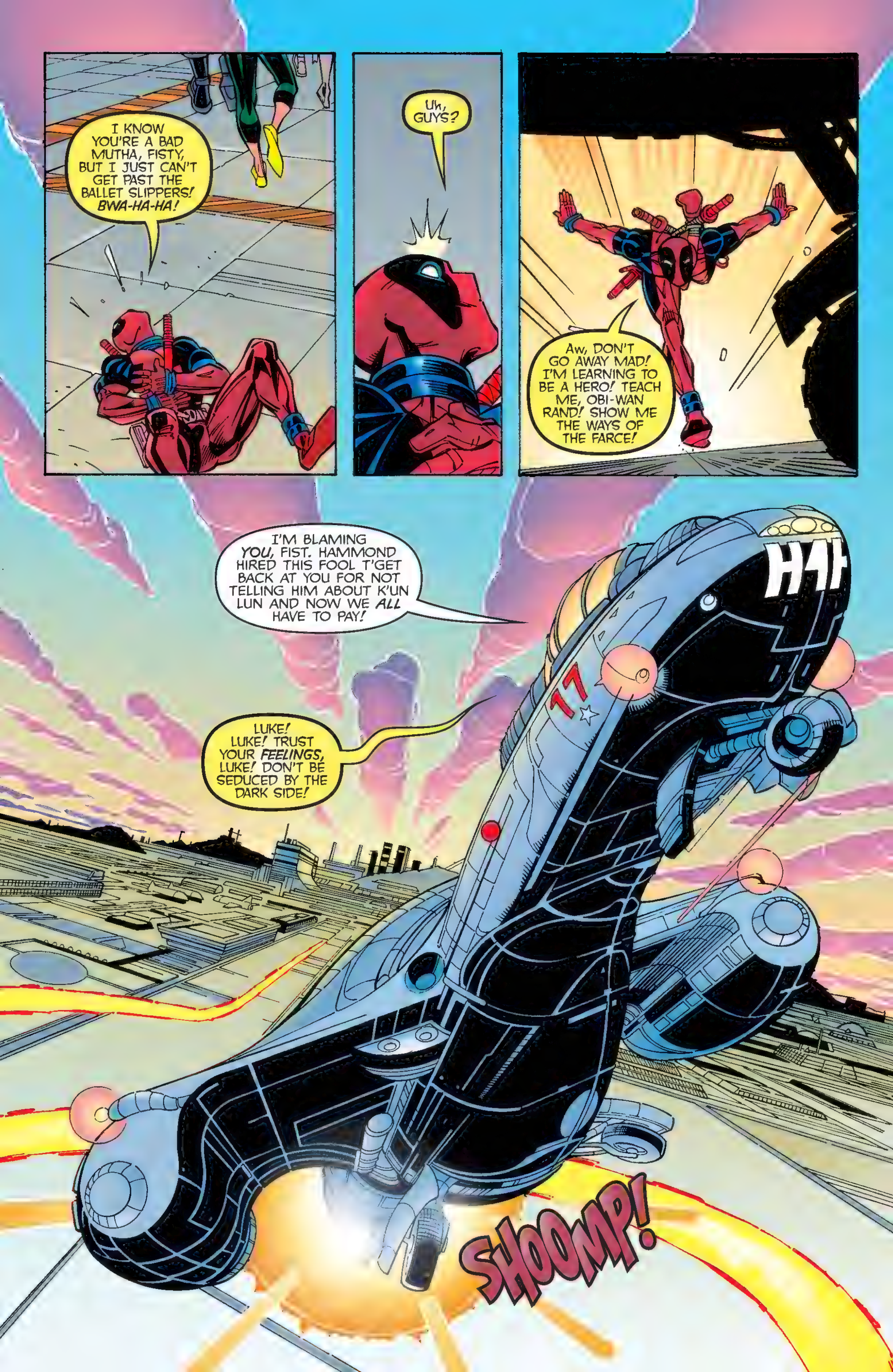

INTIMATELY. HI, BOYS.
Well, I *TOLD* THEM LIKE YOU SUGGESTED. IT... HASN'T GONE DOWN TOO WELL.
MISTY TOLD *ME*, TOO. *WHAT* WERE YOU *THINKING*, DANNY?
Oboy.
WHY'D YOU HAVE TO TELL COLLEEN, MISTY?!
BECAUSE, UNLIKE YOU, I DON'T BELIEVE IN KEEPING *SECRETS* FROM MY PARTNER... LOVER.
Ahem.
IF YOU ALL DON'T MIND CARRYING ON YOUR *PERSONAL* SQUABBLES LATER? WE HAVE SOME *BUSINESS* TO CONDUCT!

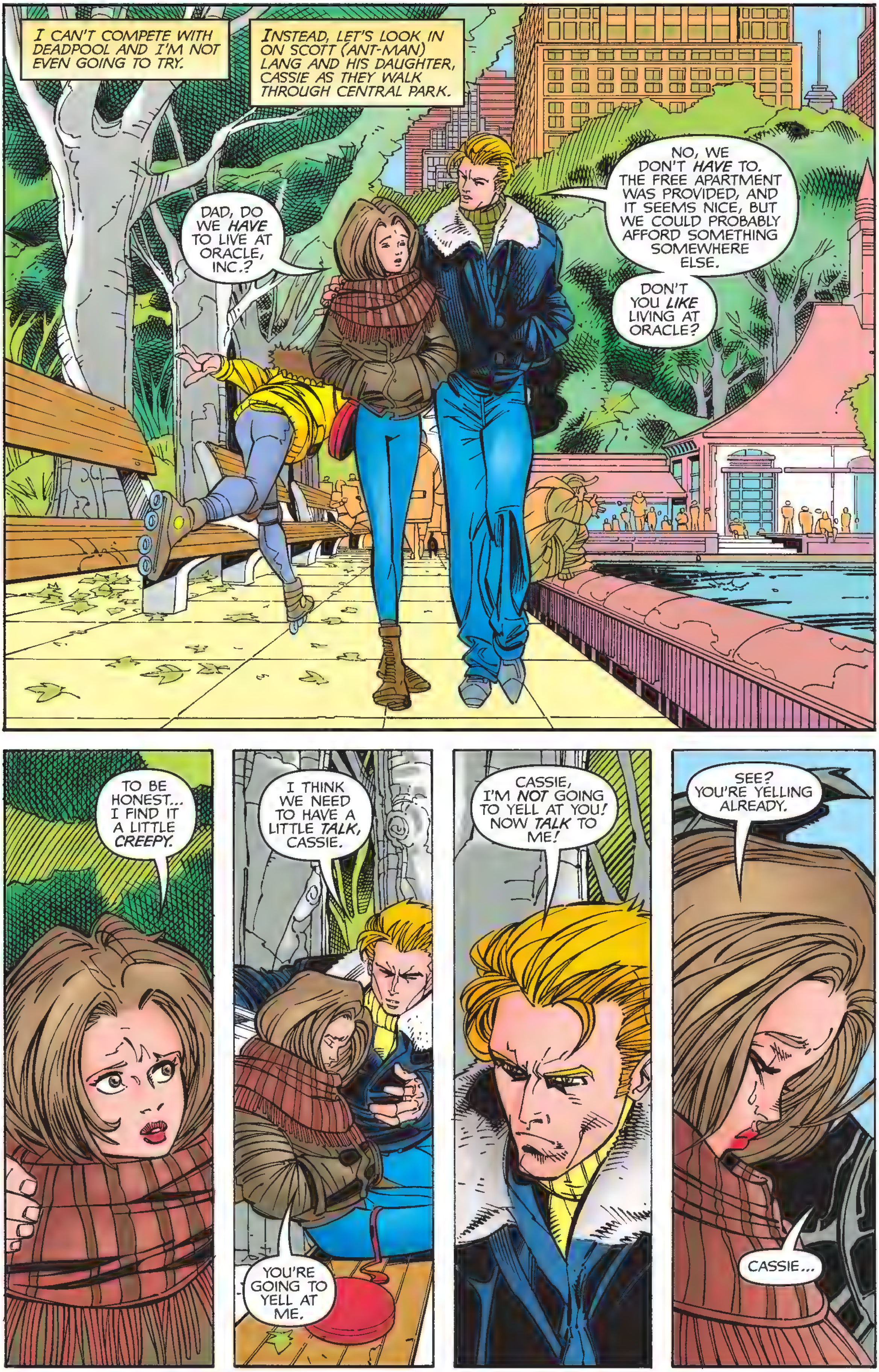

THIS IS *PROFESSOR WOLFGANG HESSLER*, A BIO-TECHNICIAN AND GENETICIST.
HIS SPECIALTY IS *WEAPONS* AND, ACCORDING TO OUR CLIENT, HE HAS CREATED A BIO-WEAPON OF ENORMOUS POWER, AND IS PLANNING TO *SELL* IT TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.
WHO'S THE CLIENT?
CLASSIFIED FOR NOW. CAN'T RISK IT BEING LEAKED IN CASE THIS MISSION FAILS.
WHERE *IS* THIS HESSLER? I'M ASSUMING FROM YOUR TONE HE'S NOT IN *THIS* COUNTRY.
HESSLER HAS TAKEN REFUGE IN *SYMKARIA*. AND IS UNDER THE PERSONAL PROTECTION OF *SILVER SABLE* AND HER *WILD PACK* UNTIL THE WEAPON AUCTION IS COMPLETE.
I THOUGHT SABLE WAS ONE OF THE *GOOD* GUYS! WASN'T SHE JUST IN NEW YORK CITY RECENTLY, HELPING OUT SPIDER-MAN?
GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS TURNED OUT TO BE THE MASTERS OF EVIL... AND ALL THE *OTHER* SECRETS BEING HIDDEN... WHO CAN YOU REALLY TRUST ANYMORE?
**IN SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #26.* --Mark

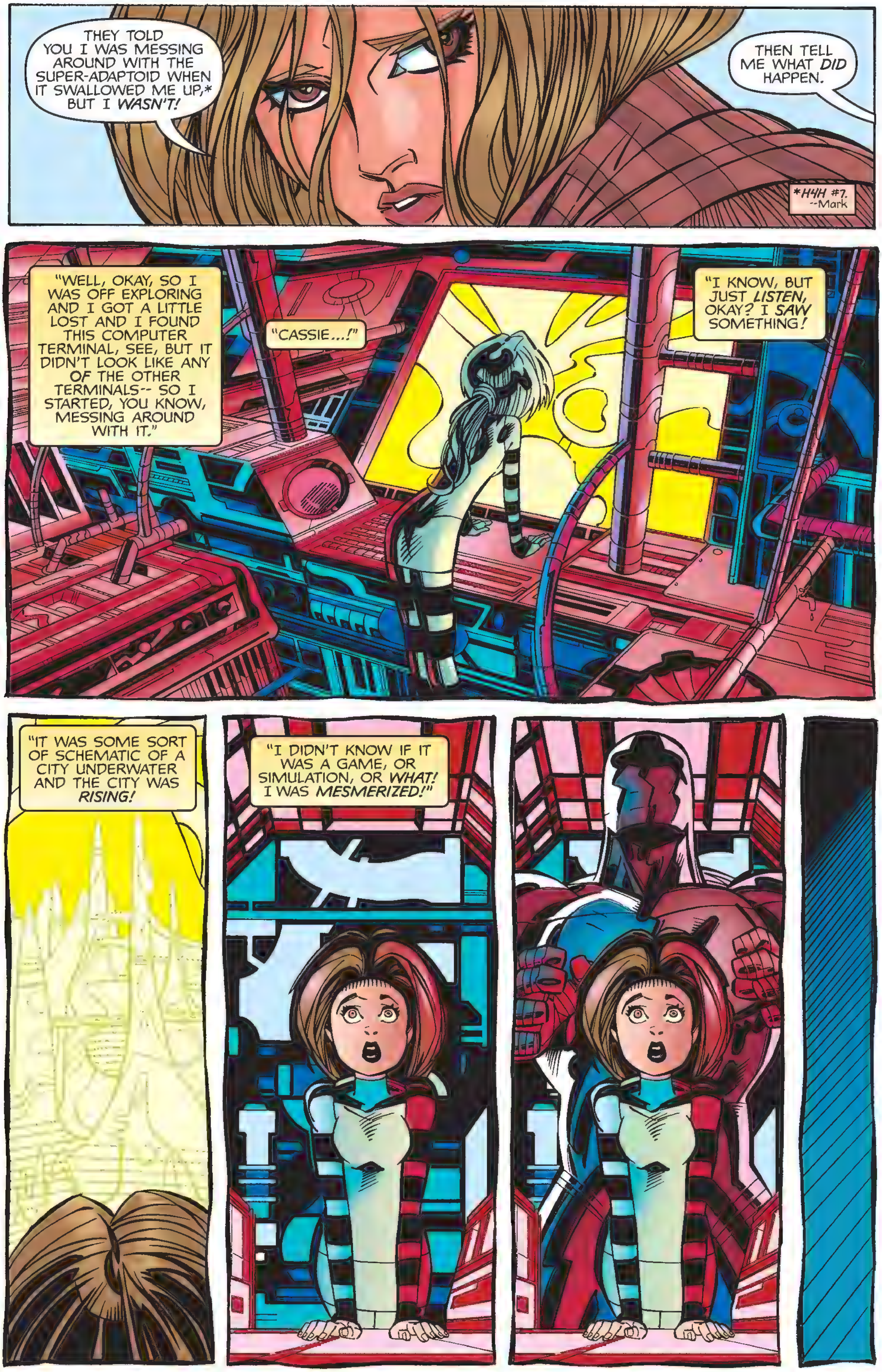

YOU'RE GETTING *CYNICAL,* Mr. HAMMOND. BUT THAT'S OKAY. CYNICAL *CAN* BE ATTRACTIVE.
WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO *DO* ABOUT THIS HESSLER?
HAND TO MOUTH
YOU'VE GOT TO *GET* HESSLER AND BRING HIM HERE. HE CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO SELL WHAT HE KNOWS.
SABLE HAS A SPECIAL *WILD PACK* TEAM PROTECTING HIM-- SANDMAN, PALADIN, NOMAD, AND THE CAT. SHE'S *EXPECTING* TROUBLE.
BLACK KNIGHT'S STILL OFF WITH THE AVENGERS... *ANT MAN'S* ON LEAVE... *WHITE TIGER'S* STILL MISSING...!
I DON'T KNOW IF WE HAVE THE PERSONNEL TO PULL THIS OFF-- NOT WITHOUT SOMEONE GETTING KILLED, WHICH I ASSUME IS *NOT* PART OF THE PLAN.
YOU'LL BE MET BY ANOTHER FREELANCE OPERATIVE AT THE RENDEZVOUS POINT. THE SOONER YOU'RE STARTED, THE SOONER YOU'RE *DONE.* GO.

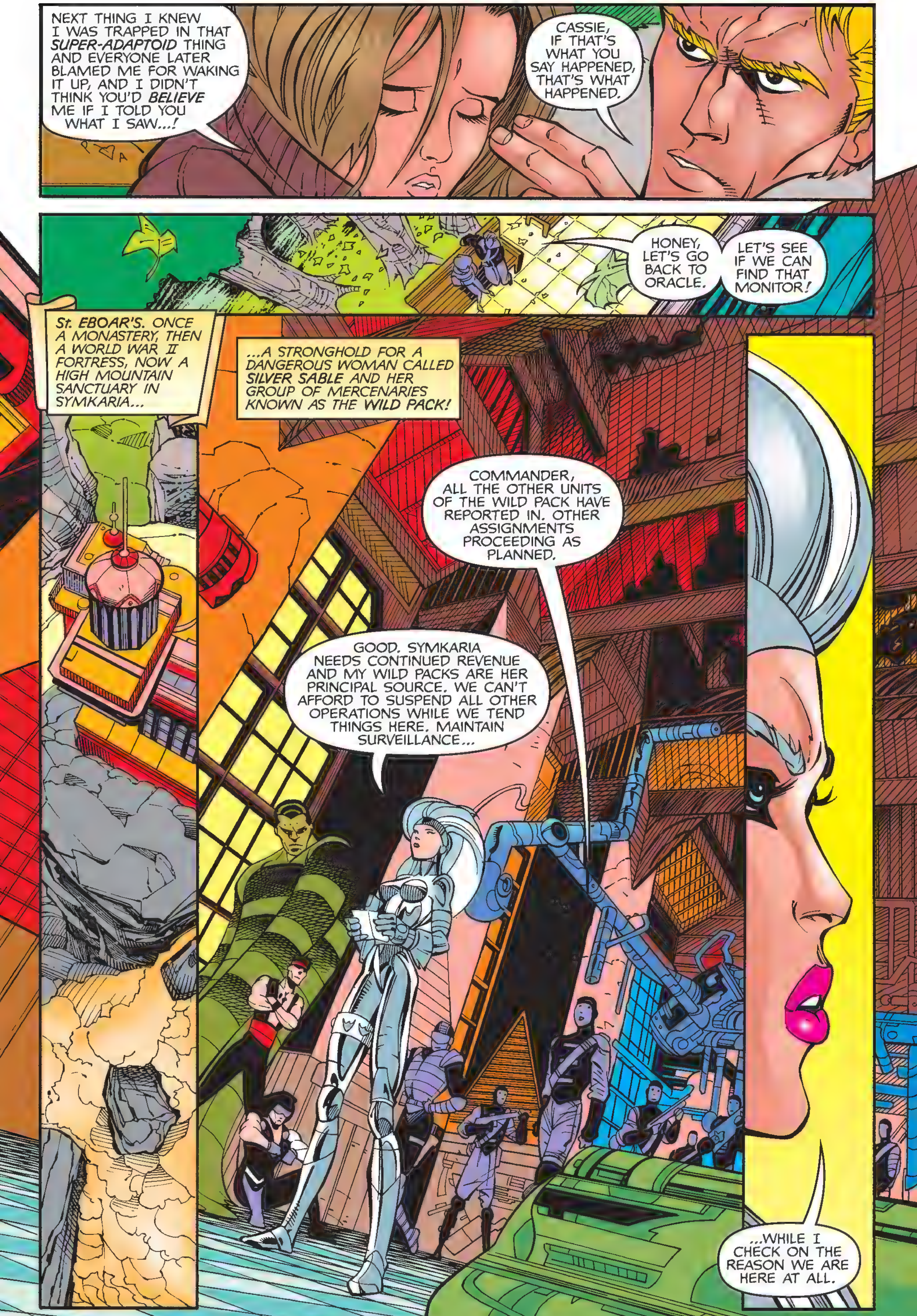

"AND, Mr. RAND-- WE'LL DISCUSS THIS *K'UN L'UN* SITUATION IN MORE DETAIL *LATER*."
HE'S DONE *WHAT?!*
SUMMONED THE MYSTIC CITY OF K'UN LUN TO THIS DIMENSION. IT'S TIED TO HIS HEARTBEAT AND CAN'T BE REVERSED. COME THE MILLENNIUM...
I UNDERSTAND! IT IS *NOT ACCEPTABLE!*
IF THE APPEARANCE OF K'UN LUN IS TIED TO IRON FIST'S CONTINUED *LIFE*, THEN SOME CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN TO IRON FIST'S IMPENDING *DEATH!*
A PRIVATE AIRFIELD NEAR THE ADRIATIC SEA...
Well, THIS IS WHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO MEET OUR FINAL TEAM MEMBER.
WHOEVER THEY ARE, THEY'RE *LATE! I HATE* WAITING!
WAIT NO MORE!

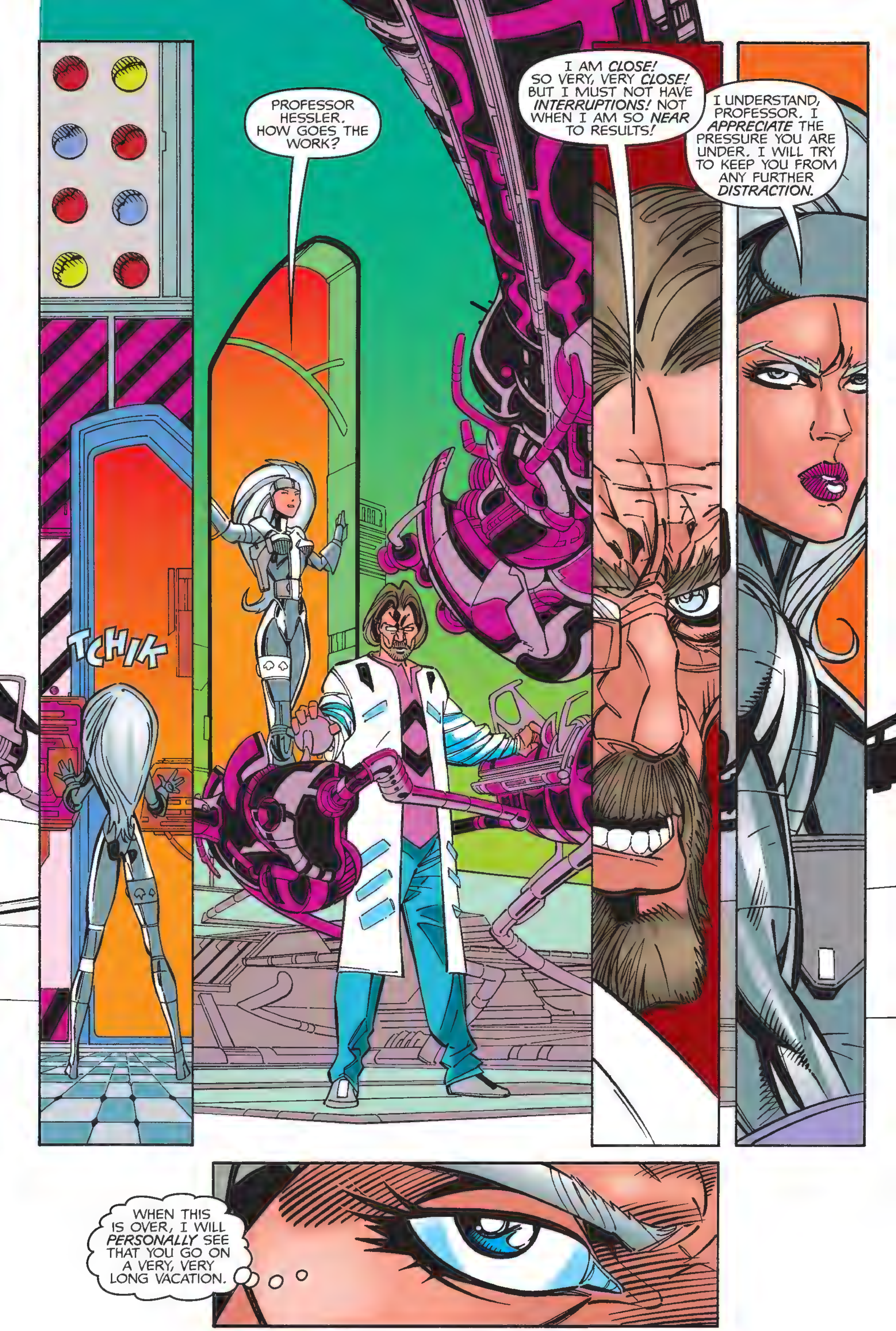

WHAT'S THE PLAN? NOT THAT I NEED A PLAN. I JUST MAKE IT UP AS I GO.
SORRY. I'LL DROP THE IMAGE INDUCER THING. YOUR PEOPLE CALLED MY PEOPLE-- LANDAU, LUCKMAN, AND LAKE*-- AND TOLD ME TO COME INCOGNITO. I COULDN'T FIND A COGNITO, SO I DROVE A PORSCHE INSTEAD.
GREAT. DEADPOOL. THE MERC WITH A MOUTH.
*CHECK OUT DEADPOOL #17 FOR 'POOL'S NEW EMPLOYMENT STATUS. --Mark
Oooooh! SOY-N-PEPPA! ≈SQUEAL!≈
I HAVE ALL YOUR CDs! YOU'RE THE GINCHIEST!
LUKE CAGE! POWER MAN! M'BROTHER, M'MAN, M'MAIN MAIN! WHO IT IS, WHAT IT BE, HOW IT AM, MAH BROTHAH!
Heh.
Heh heh.
BWA HA HA HA HA HA!

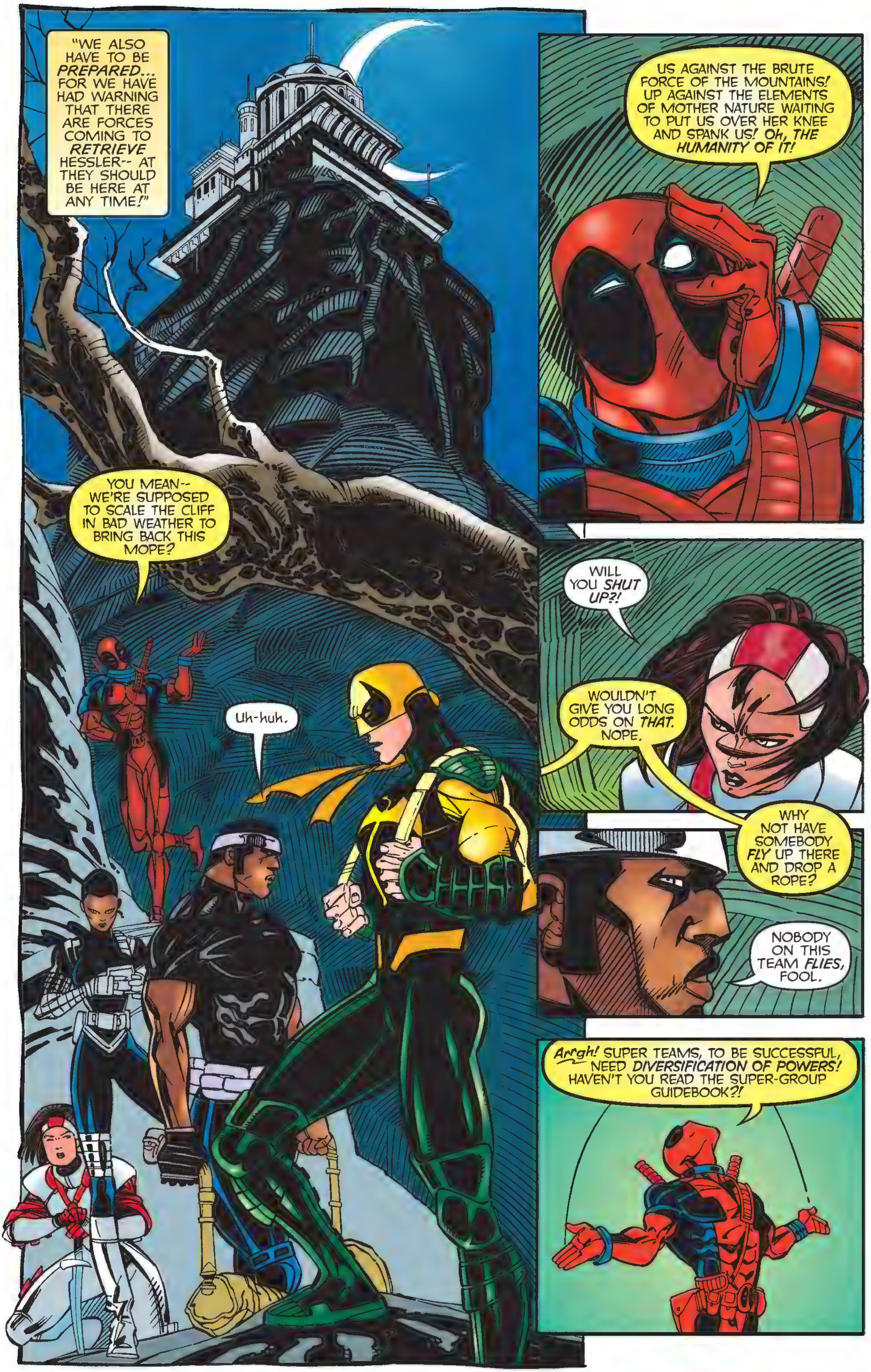

I KNOW YOU'RE A BAD MUTHA, FISTY, BUT I JUST CAN'T GET PAST THE BALLET SLIPPERS! *BWA-HA-HA!*
Uh, GUYS?
Aw, DON'T GO AWAY MAD! I'M LEARNING TO BE A HERO! TEACH ME, OBI-WAN RAND! SHOW ME THE WAYS OF THE FARCE!
I'M BLAMING *YOU,* FIST. HAMMOND HIRED THIS FOOL T'GET BACK AT YOU FOR NOT TELLING HIM ABOUT K'UN LUN AND NOW WE *ALL* HAVE TO PAY!
LUKE! LUKE! TRUST YOUR *FEELINGS,* LUKE! DON'T BE SEDUCED BY THE DARK SIDE!
H4H
17
SHOOMP!

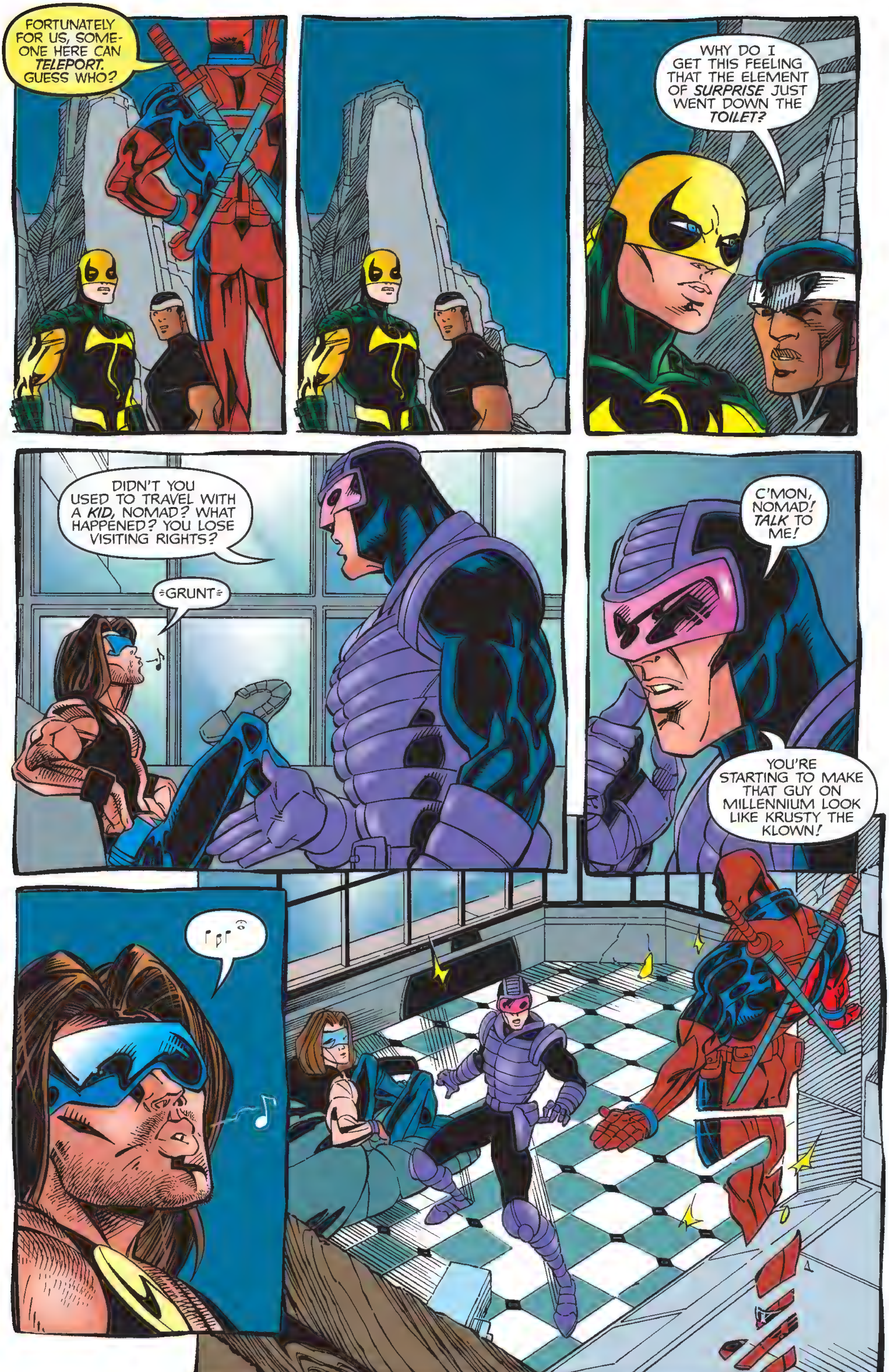

I CAN'T COMPETE WITH DEADPOOL AND I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO TRY.
INSTEAD, LET'S LOOK IN ON SCOTT (ANT-MAN) LANG AND HIS DAUGHTER, CASSIE AS THEY WALK THROUGH CENTRAL PARK.
DAD, DO WE *HAVE* TO LIVE AT ORACLE, INC.?
NO, WE DON'T *HAVE* TO. THE FREE APARTMENT WAS PROVIDED, AND IT SEEMS NICE, BUT WE COULD PROBABLY AFFORD SOMETHING SOMEWHERE ELSE.
DON'T YOU *LIKE* LIVING AT ORACLE?
TO BE HONEST... I FIND IT A LITTLE *CREEPY*.
I THINK WE NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE *TALK*, CASSIE.
YOU'RE GOING TO YELL AT ME.
CASSIE, I'M *NOT* GOING TO YELL AT YOU! NOW *TALK* TO ME!
SEE? YOU'RE YELLING ALREADY.
CASSIE...

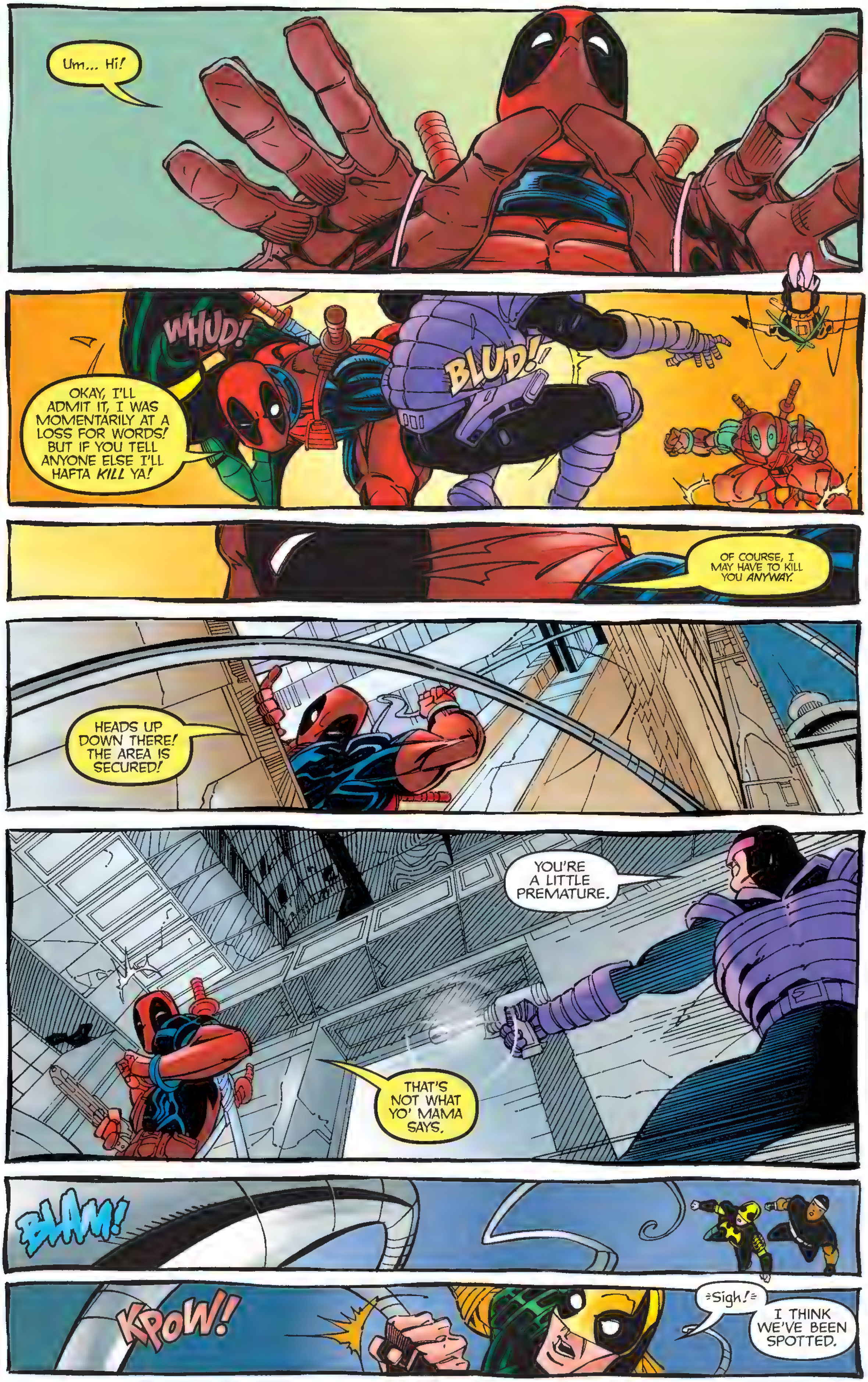

THEY TOLD YOU I WAS MESSING AROUND WITH THE SUPER-ADAPTOID WHEN IT SWALLOWED ME UP,* BUT I *WASN'T!*
THEN TELL ME WHAT *DID* HAPPEN.
**H4H #7. --Mark*
"WELL, OKAY, SO I WAS OFF EXPLORING AND I GOT A LITTLE LOST AND I FOUND THIS COMPUTER TERMINAL, SEE, BUT IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE ANY *OF* THE OTHER TERMINALS-- SO I STARTED, YOU KNOW, MESSING AROUND WITH IT."
"CASSIE...!"
"I KNOW, BUT JUST *LISTEN,* OKAY? I *SAW* SOMETHING!
"IT WAS SOME SORT OF SCHEMATIC OF A CITY UNDERWATER AND THE CITY WAS *RISING!*
"I DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WAS A GAME, OR SIMULATION, OR *WHAT!* I WAS *MESMERIZED!*"

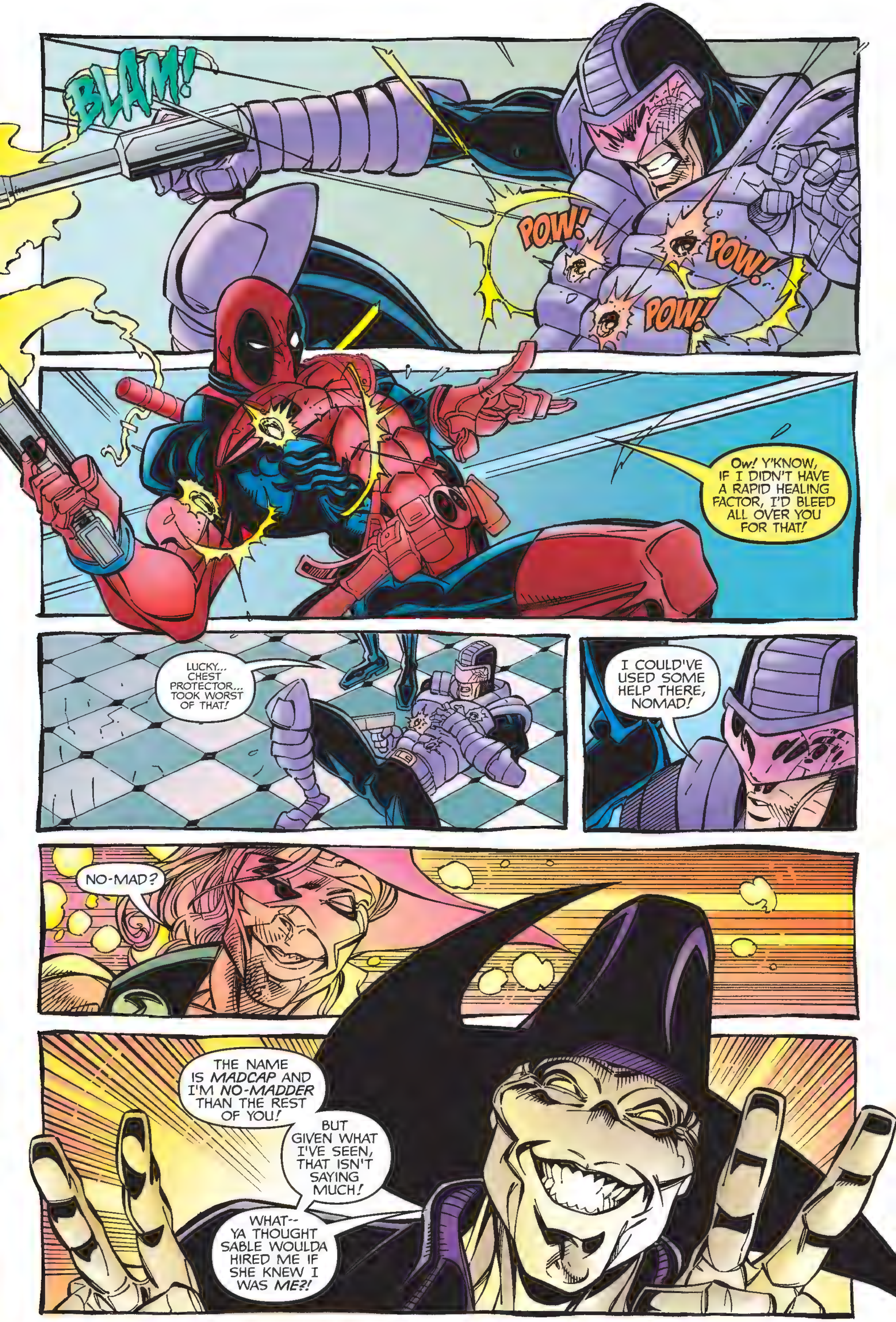

NEXT THING I KNEW I WAS TRAPPED IN THAT ***SUPER-ADAPTOID*** THING AND EVERYONE LATER BLAMED ME FOR WAKING IT UP, AND I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D ***BELIEVE*** ME IF I TOLD YOU WHAT I SAW...!
CASSIE, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY HAPPENED, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
HONEY, LET'S GO BACK TO ORACLE.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND THAT MONITOR!
St. EBOAR'S. ONCE A MONASTERY, THEN A WORLD WAR II FORTRESS, NOW A HIGH MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY IN SYMKARIA...
...A STRONGHOLD FOR A DANGEROUS WOMAN CALLED ***SILVER SABLE*** AND HER GROUP OF MERCENARIES KNOWN AS THE ***WILD PACK!***
COMMANDER, ALL THE OTHER UNITS OF THE WILD PACK HAVE REPORTED IN. OTHER ASSIGNMENTS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED.
GOOD. SYMKARIA NEEDS CONTINUED REVENUE AND MY WILD PACKS ARE HER PRINCIPAL SOURCE. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SUSPEND ALL OTHER OPERATIONS WHILE WE TEND THINGS HERE. MAINTAIN SURVEILLANCE...
...WHILE I CHECK ON THE REASON WE ARE HERE AT ALL.

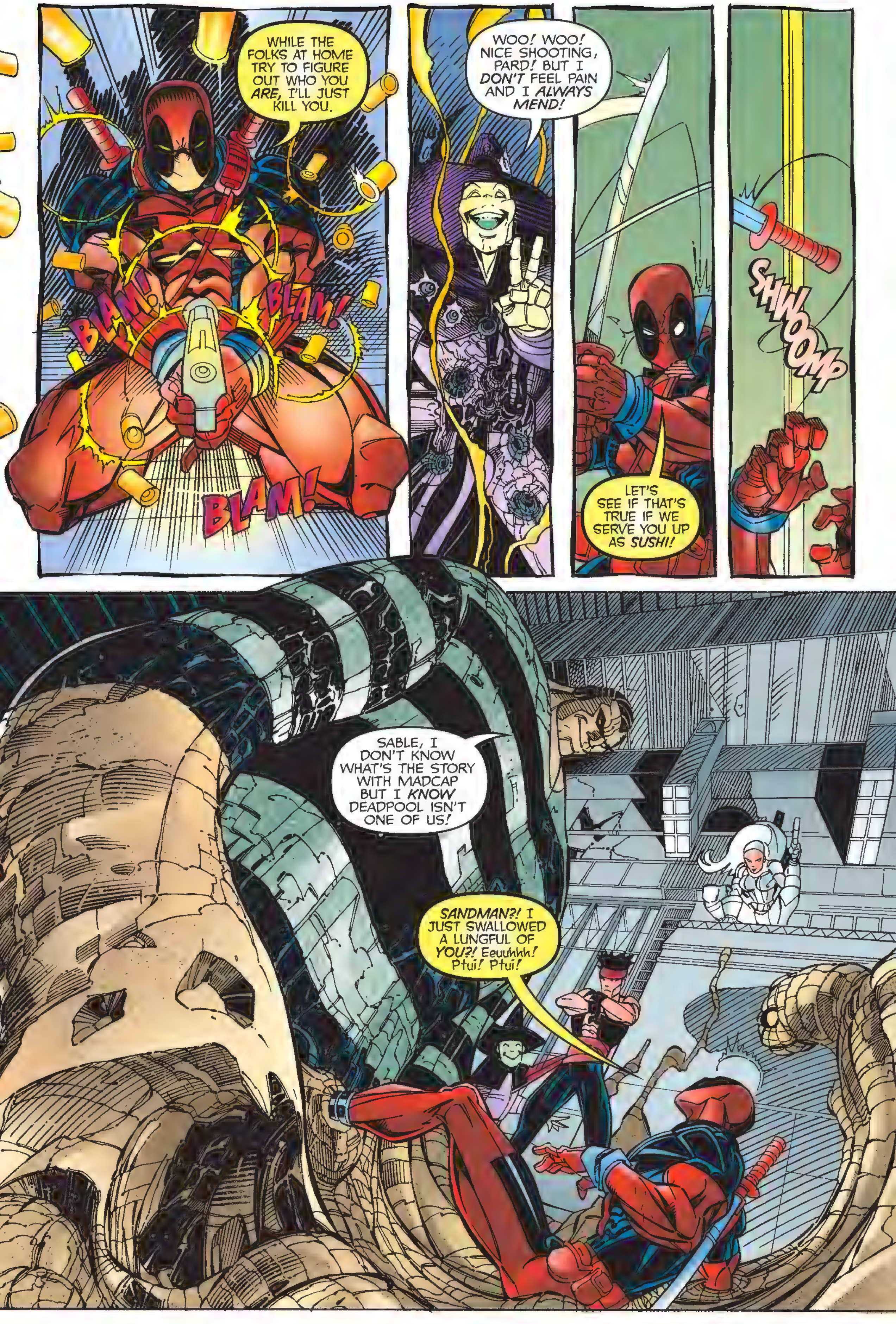

PROFESSOR HESSLER. HOW GOES THE WORK?
I AM *CLOSE!* SO VERY, VERY *CLOSE!* BUT I MUST NOT HAVE *INTERRUPTIONS!* NOT WHEN I AM SO *NEAR* TO RESULTS!
I UNDERSTAND, PROFESSOR. I *APPRECIATE* THE PRESSURE YOU ARE UNDER. I WILL TRY TO KEEP YOU FROM ANY FURTHER *DISTRACTION.*
TCHIK
WHEN THIS IS OVER, I WILL *PERSONALLY* SEE THAT YOU GO ON A VERY, VERY LONG VACATION.

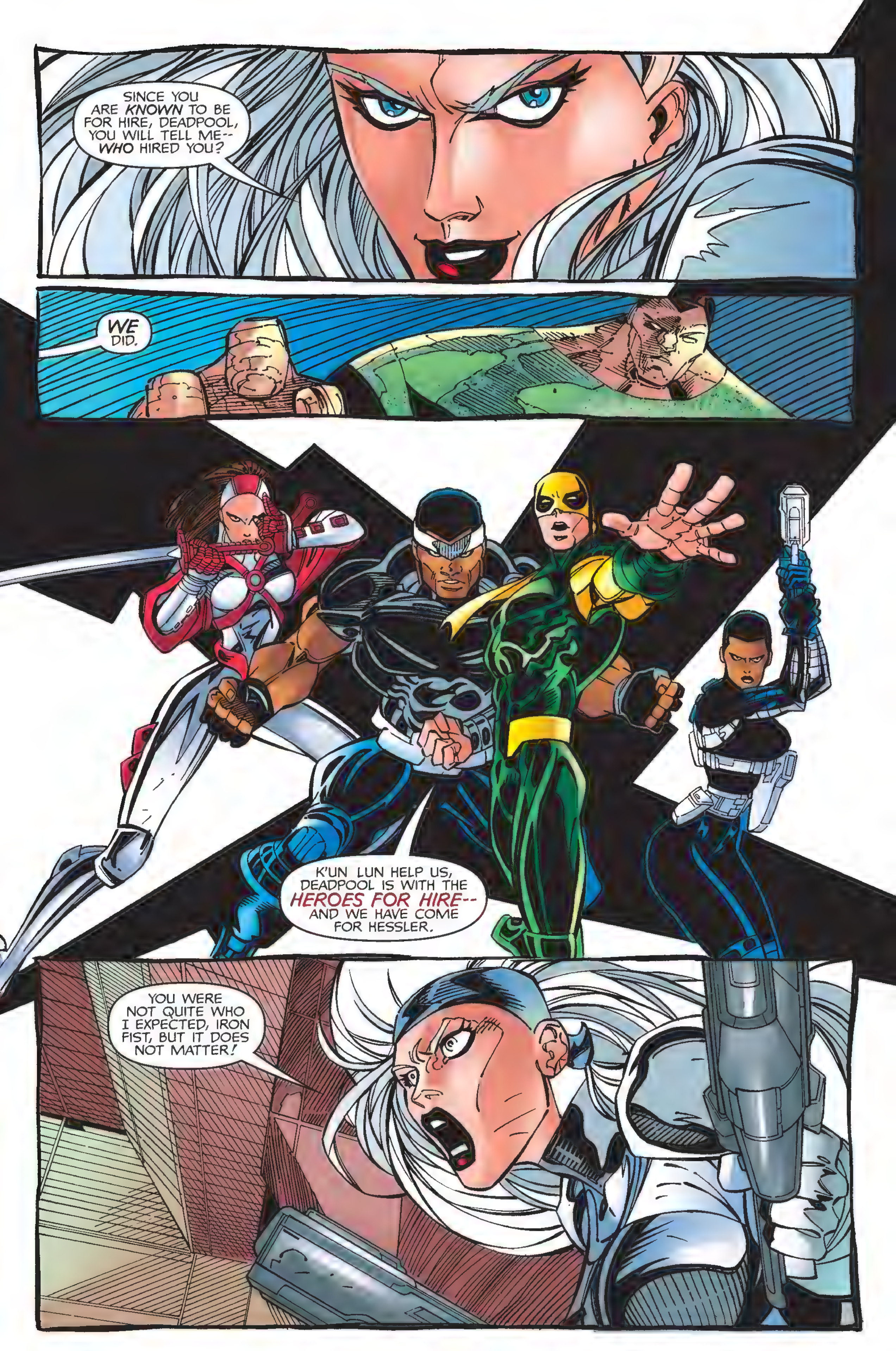

"WE ALSO HAVE TO BE *PREPARED*... FOR WE HAVE HAD WARNING THAT THERE ARE FORCES COMING TO *RETRIEVE* HESSLER-- AT THEY SHOULD BE HERE AT ANY TIME!"
YOU MEAN-- WE'RE SUPPOSED TO SCALE THE CLIFF IN BAD WEATHER TO BRING BACK THIS MOPE?
Uh-huh.
US AGAINST THE BRUTE FORCE OF THE MOUNTAINS! UP AGAINST THE ELEMENTS OF MOTHER NATURE WAITING TO PUT US OVER HER KNEE AND SPANK US! *OH, THE HUMANITY OF IT!*
WILL YOU *SHUT UP?!*
WOULDN'T GIVE YOU LONG ODDS ON *THAT*. NOPE.
WHY NOT HAVE SOMEBODY *FLY* UP THERE AND DROP A ROPE?
NOBODY ON THIS TEAM *FLIES*, FOOL.
Argh! SUPER TEAMS, TO BE SUCCESSFUL, NEED *DIVERSIFICATION OF POWERS!* HAVEN'T YOU READ THE SUPER-GROUP GUIDEBOOK?!

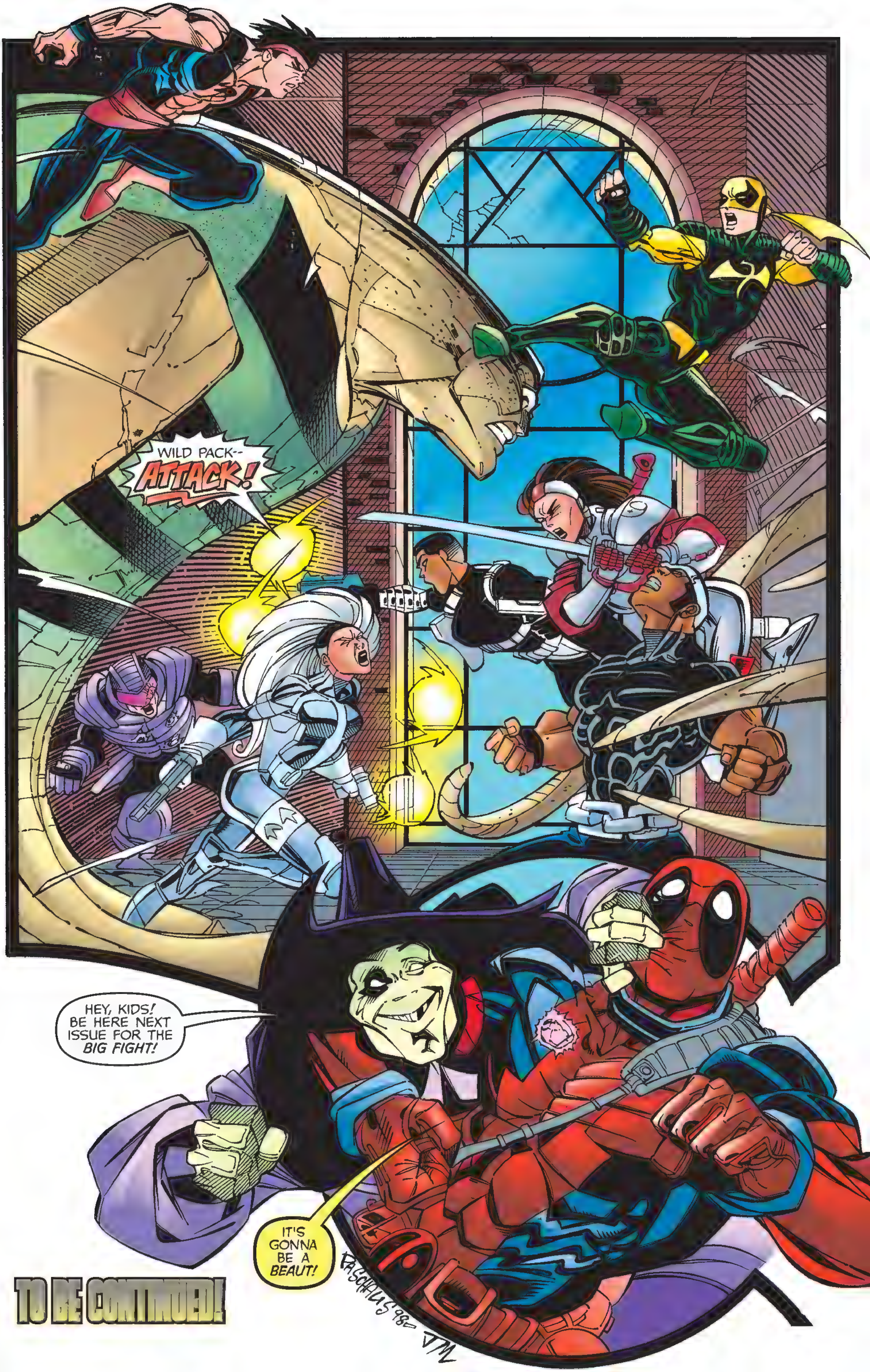

FORTUNATELY FOR US, SOMEONE HERE CAN *TELEPORT.* GUESS WHO?
WHY DO I GET THIS FEELING THAT THE ELEMENT OF *SURPRISE* JUST WENT DOWN THE *TOILET?*
DIDN'T YOU USED TO TRAVEL WITH A *KID,* NOMAD? WHAT HAPPENED? YOU LOSE VISITING RIGHTS?
GRUNT
C'MON, NOMAD! *TALK* TO ME!
YOU'RE STARTING TO MAKE THAT GUY ON MILLENNIUM LOOK LIKE KRUSTY THE KLOWN!

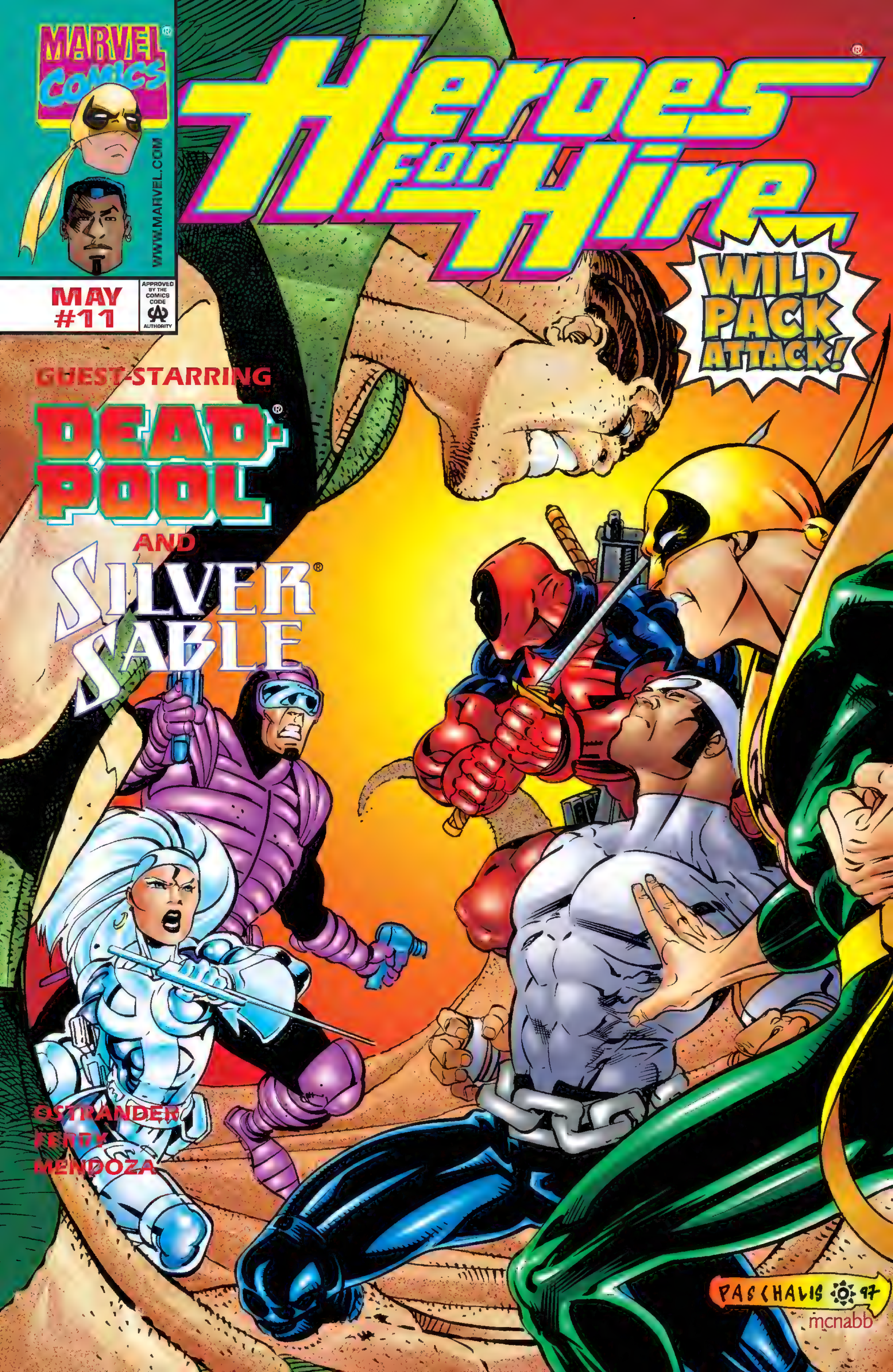

Um... Hi!
WHUD!
BLUD!
OKAY, I'LL ADMIT IT, I WAS MOMENTARILY AT A LOSS FOR WORDS! BUT IF YOU TELL ANYONE ELSE I'LL HAFTA *KILL* YA!
OF COURSE, I MAY HAVE TO KILL YOU *ANYWAY.*
HEADS UP DOWN THERE! THE AREA IS SECURED!
YOU'RE A LITTLE PREMATURE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT YO' MAMA SAYS.
BLAM!
KPOW!
Sigh!
I THINK WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED.


BLAM!
POW!
POW!
POW!
Ow! Y'KNOW, IF I DIDN'T HAVE A RAPID HEALING FACTOR, I'D BLEED ALL OVER YOU FOR THAT!
LUCKY... CHEST PROTECTOR... TOOK WORST OF THAT!
I COULD'VE USED SOME HELP THERE, NOMAD!
NO-MAD?
THE NAME IS *MADCAP* AND I'M *NO-MADDER* THAN THE REST OF YOU!
BUT GIVEN WHAT I'VE SEEN, THAT ISN'T SAYING MUCH!
WHAT-- YA THOUGHT SABLE WOULDA HIRED ME IF SHE KNEW I WAS *ME?!*


WHILE THE FOLKS AT HOME TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU *ARE*, I'LL JUST KILL YOU.
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
WOO! WOO! NICE SHOOTING, PARD! BUT I *DON'T* FEEL PAIN AND I *ALWAYS MEND!*
LET'S SEE IF THAT'S TRUE IF WE SERVE YOU UP AS *SUSHI!*
SHWOOMP
SABLE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S THE STORY WITH MADCAP BUT I *KNOW* DEADPOOL ISN'T ONE OF US!
SANDMAN?! I JUST SWALLOWED A LUNGFUL OF *YOU?!* Eeuuhhh! Ptui! Ptui!


SINCE YOU ARE *KNOWN* TO BE FOR HIRE, DEADPOOL, YOU WILL TELL ME-- *WHO* HIRED YOU?
WE DID.
K'UN LUN HELP US, DEADPOOL IS WITH THE *HEROES FOR HIRE*-- AND WE HAVE COME FOR HESSLER.
YOU WERE NOT QUITE WHO I EXPECTED, IRON FIST, BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER!


WILD PACK-- ATTACK!
HEY, KIDS! BE HERE NEXT ISSUE FOR THE *BIG FIGHT!*
IT'S GONNA BE A *BEAUT!*
PASCHALIS '98 JM
TO BE CONTINUED!


MARVEL COMICS
Heroes for Hire
MAY #11
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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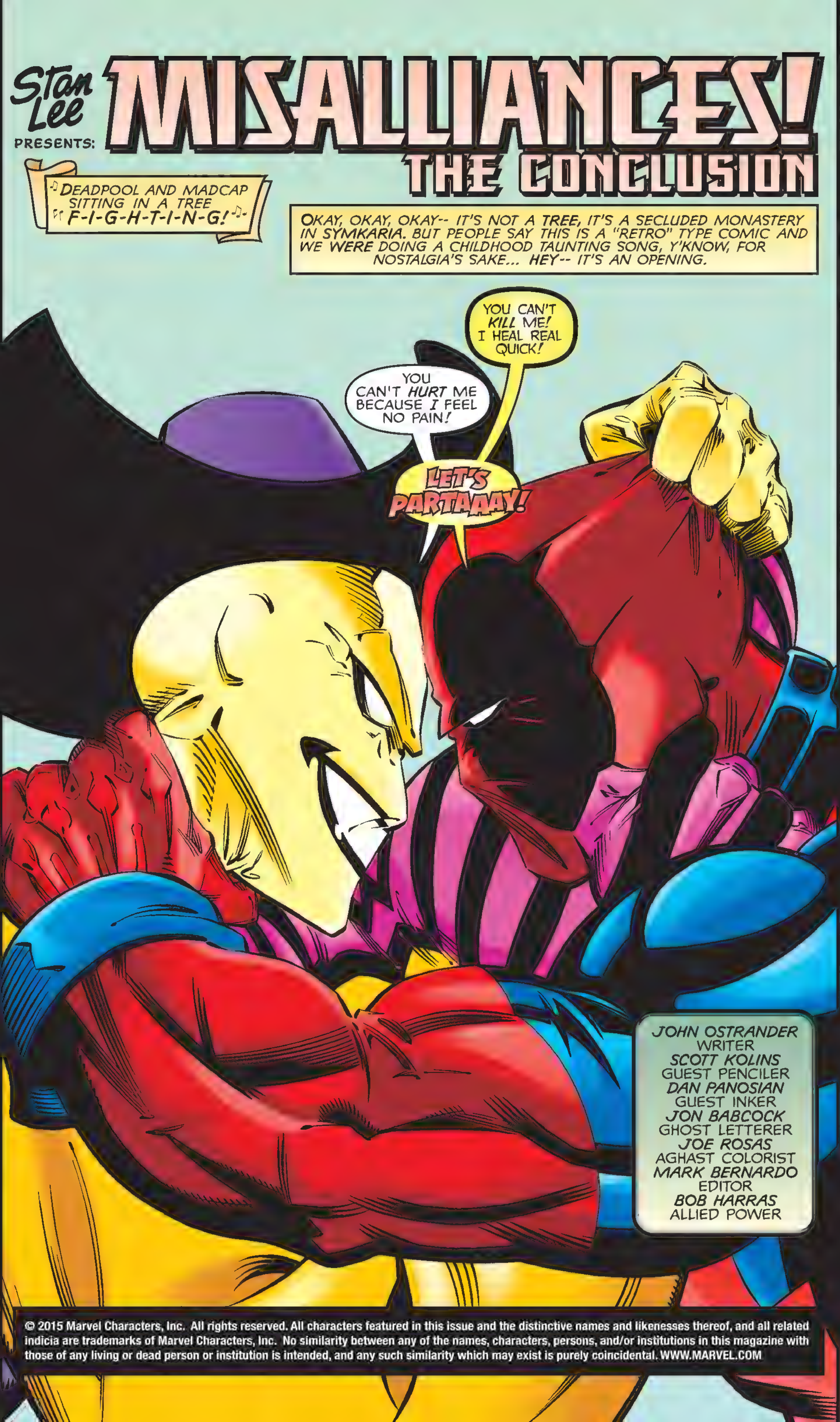
WILD PACK ATTACK!
GUEST-STARRING
DEADPOOL
AND
SILVER SABLE
OSTRANDER
FERRY
MENDOZA
PASCHALIS 97
mcnabb

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

MISALLIANCES!

THE CONCLUSION


♫ DEADPOOL AND MADCAP SITTING IN A TREE "F-I-G-H-T-I-N-G!" ♫
OKAY, OKAY, OKAY-- IT'S NOT A TREE, IT'S A SECLUDED MONASTERY IN SYMKARIA. BUT PEOPLE SAY THIS IS A "RETRO" TYPE COMIC AND WE WERE DOING A CHILDHOOD TAUNTING SONG, Y'KNOW, FOR NOSTALGIA'S SAKE... HEY-- IT'S AN OPENING.
YOU CAN'T HURT ME BECAUSE I FEEL NO PAIN!
YOU CAN'T KILL ME! I HEAL REAL QUICK!
LET'S PARTAAAY!

JOHN OSTRANDER
WRITER
SCOTT KOLINS
GUEST PENCILER
DAN PANOSIAN
GUEST INKER
JON BABCOCK
GHOST LETTERER
JOE ROSAS
AGHAST COLORIST
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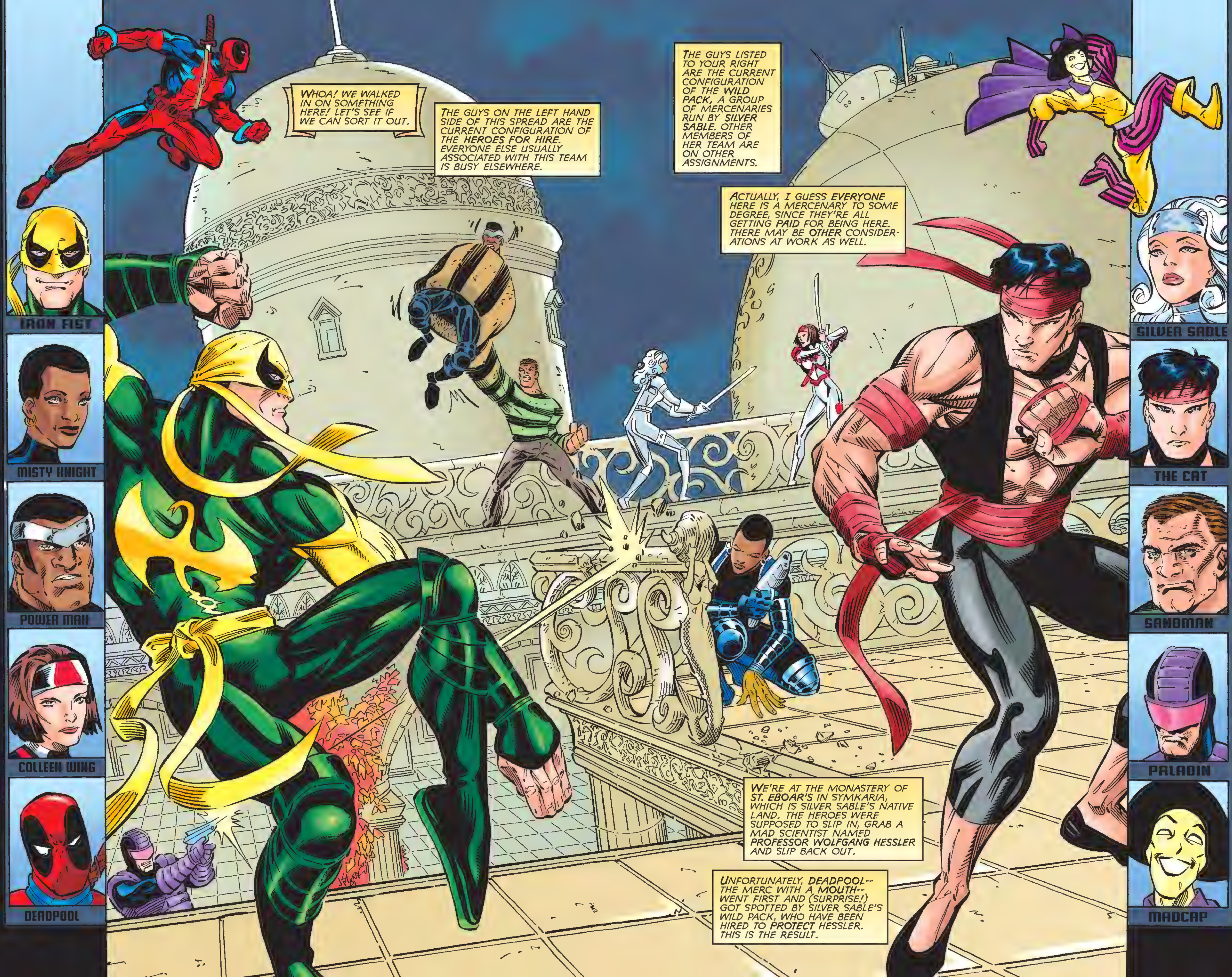
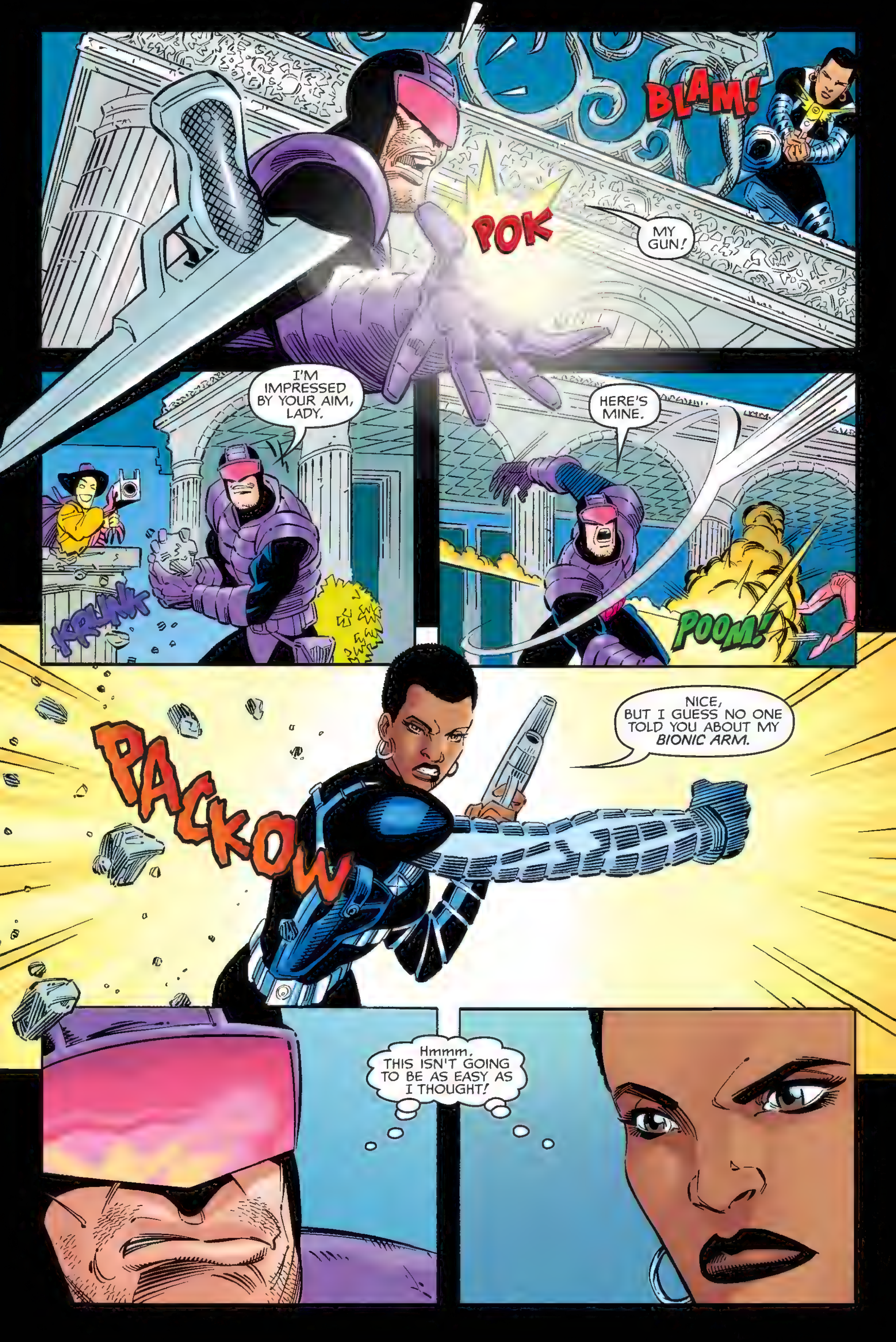
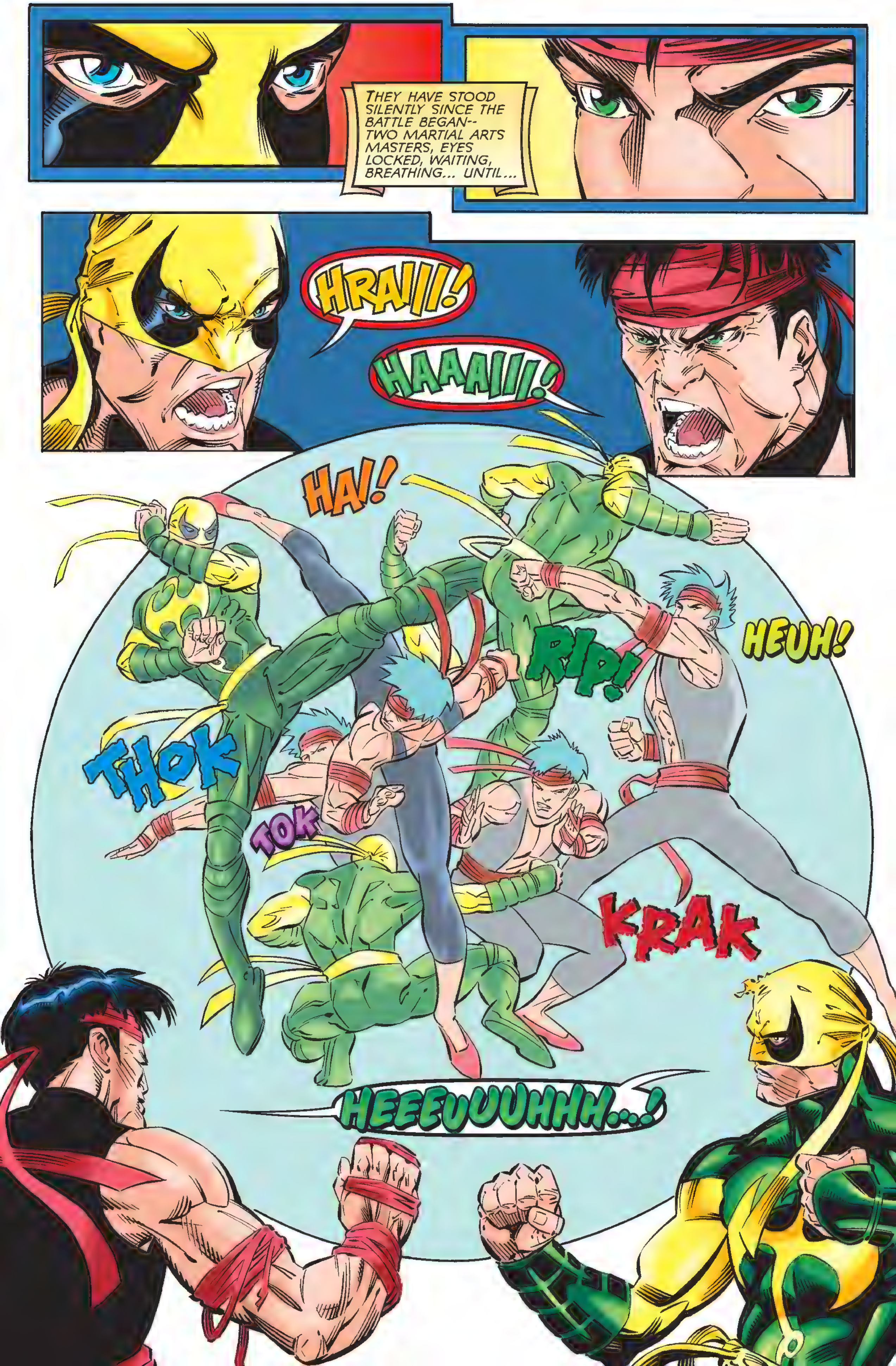
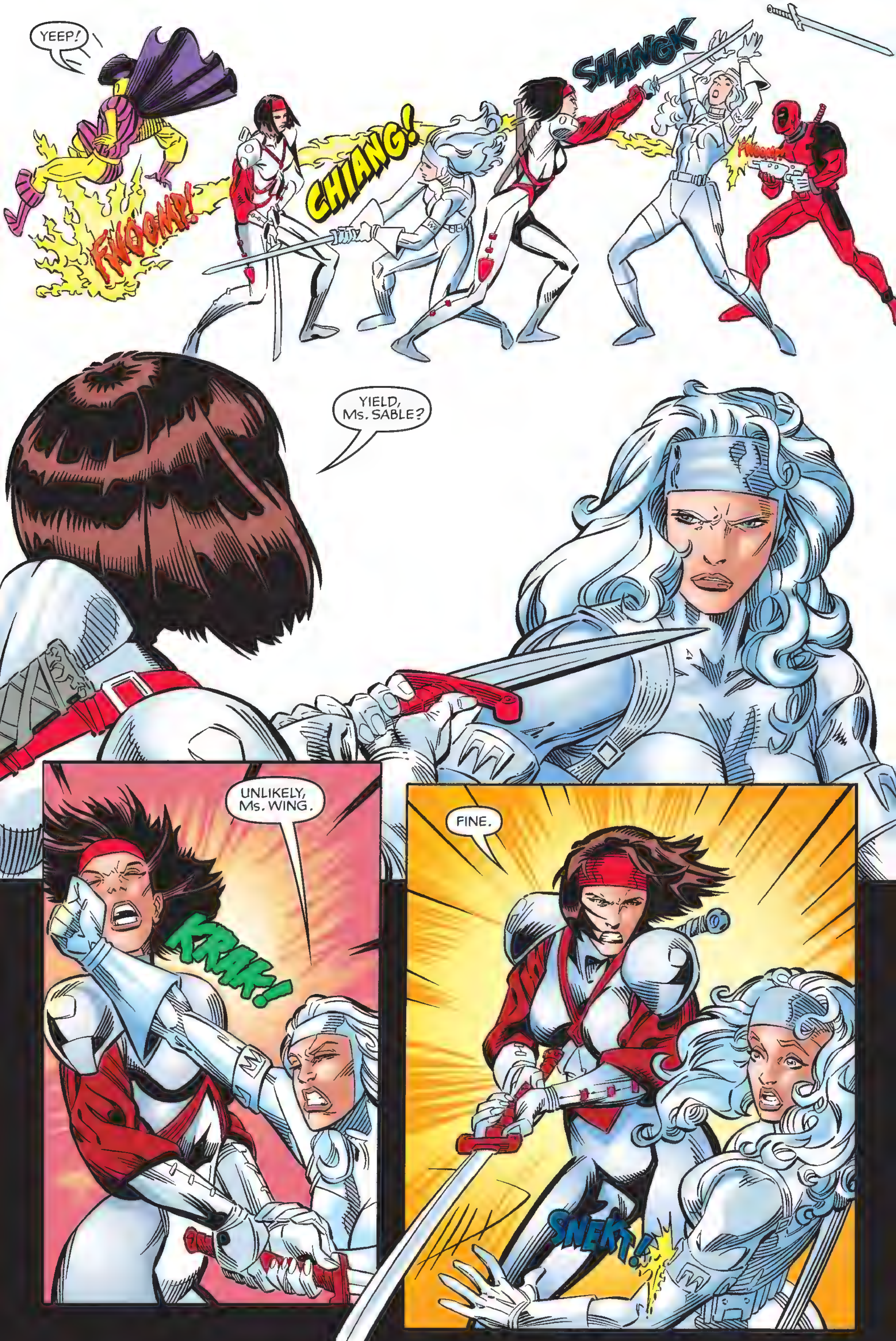
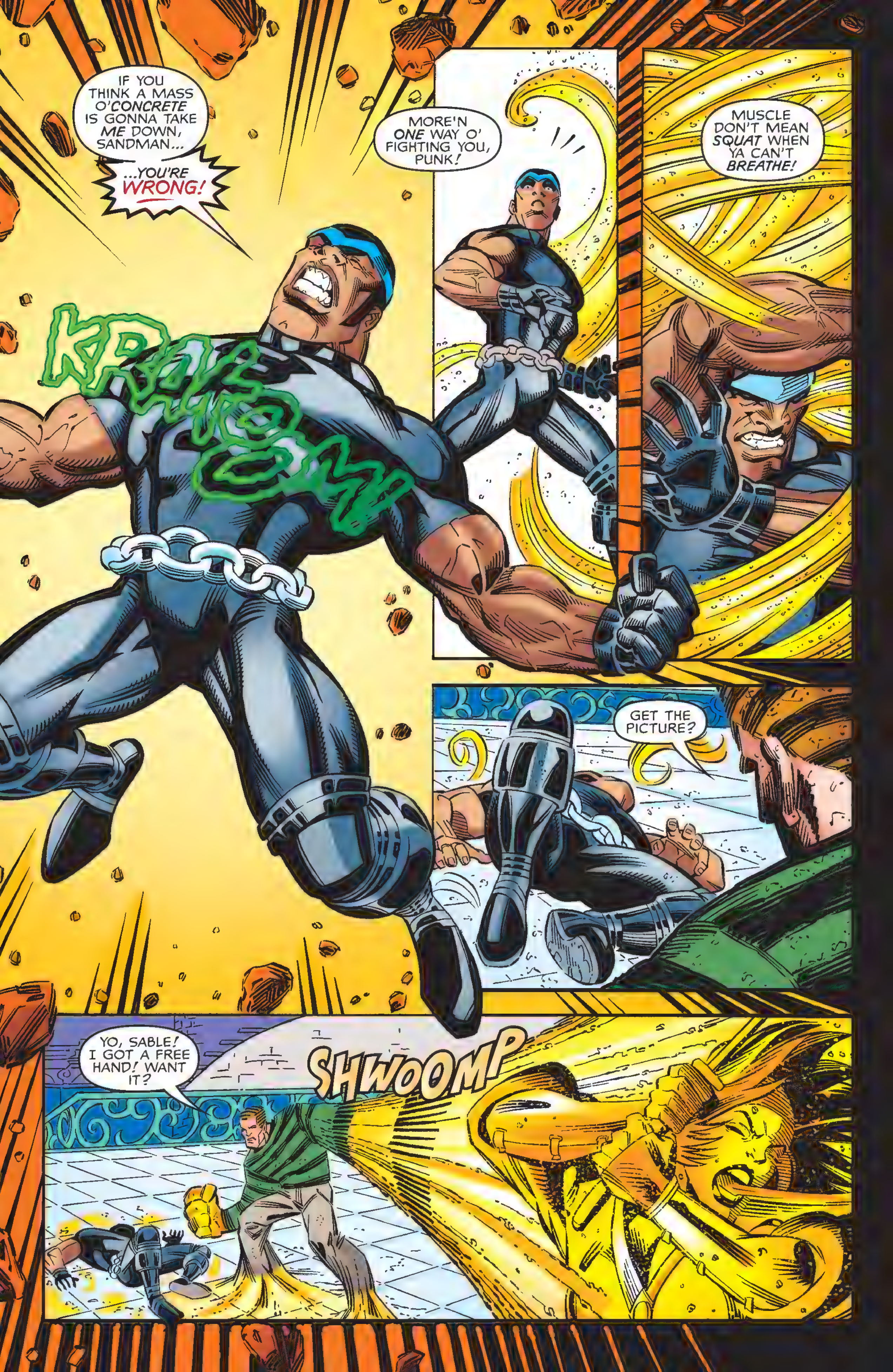
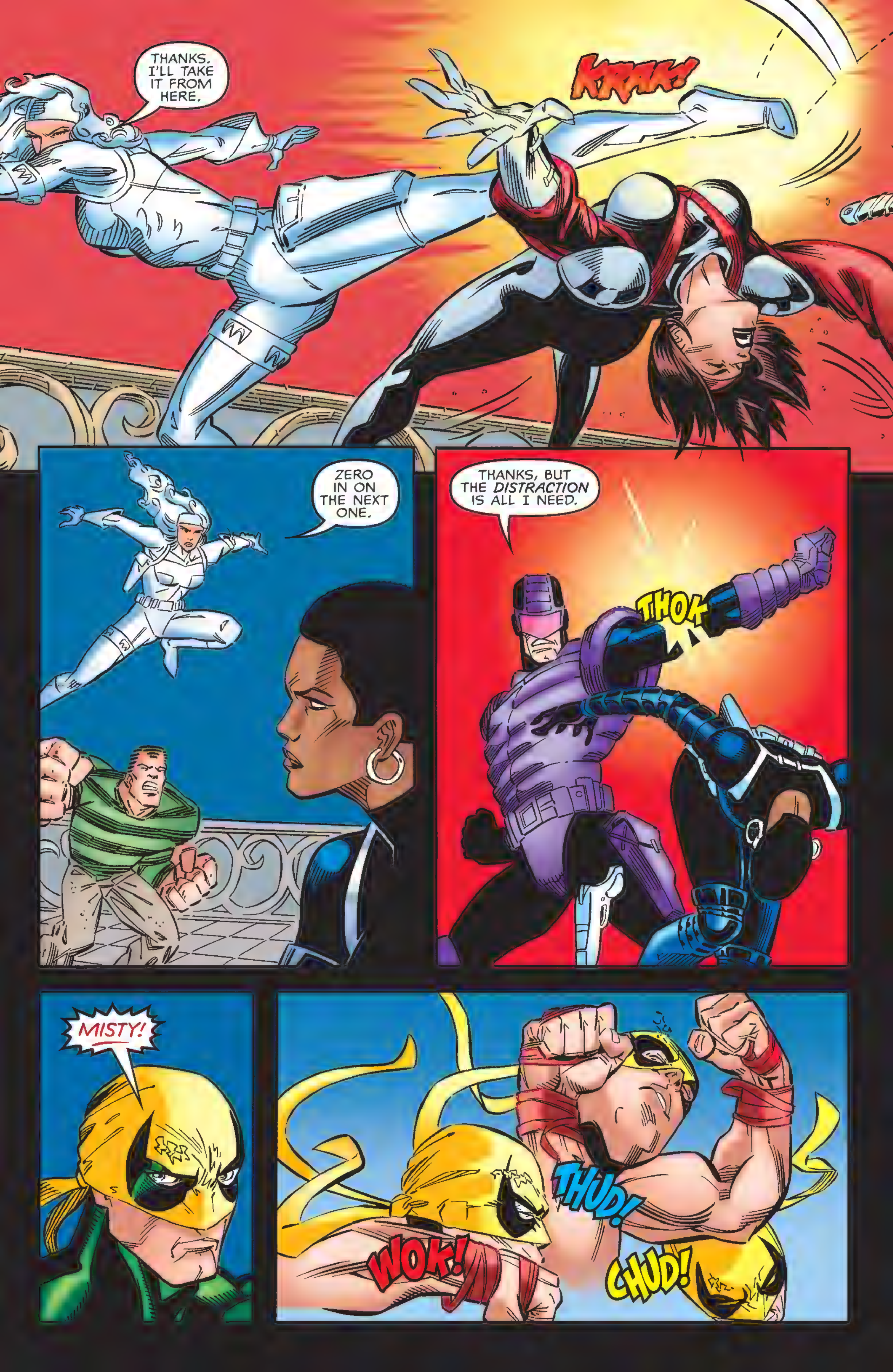

WHOA! WE WALKED IN ON SOMETHING HERE! LET'S SEE IF WE CAN SORT IT OUT.
THE GUYS ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THIS SPREAD ARE THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF THE **HEROES FOR HIRE**. EVERYONE ELSE USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TEAM IS BUSY ELSEWHERE.
THE GUYS LISTED TO YOUR RIGHT ARE THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF THE **WILD PACK,** A GROUP OF MERCENARIES RUN BY **SILVER SABLE**. OTHER MEMBERS OF HER TEAM ARE ON OTHER ASSIGNMENTS.
ACTUALLY, I GUESS **EVERYONE** HERE IS A MERCENARY TO SOME DEGREE, SINCE THEY'RE ALL GETTING **PAID** FOR BEING HERE. THERE MAY BE **OTHER** CONSIDERATIONS AT WORK AS WELL.
WE'RE AT THE MONASTERY OF **ST. EBOAR'S** IN SYMKARIA, WHICH IS SILVER SABLE'S NATIVE LAND. THE HEROES WERE SUPPOSED TO SLIP IN, GRAB A MAD SCIENTIST NAMED **PROFESSOR WOLFGANG HESSLER** AND SLIP BACK OUT.
UNFORTUNATELY, **DEADPOOL**-- THE MERC WITH A **MOUTH**-- WENT FIRST AND (SURPRISE!) GOT SPOTTED BY SILVER SABLE'S WILD PACK, WHO HAVE BEEN HIRED TO **PROTECT** HESSLER. THIS IS THE RESULT.
IRON FIST
MISTY KNIGHT
POWER MAN
COLLEEN WING
DEADPOOL
SILVER SABLE
THE CAT
SANDMAN
PALADIN
MADCAP

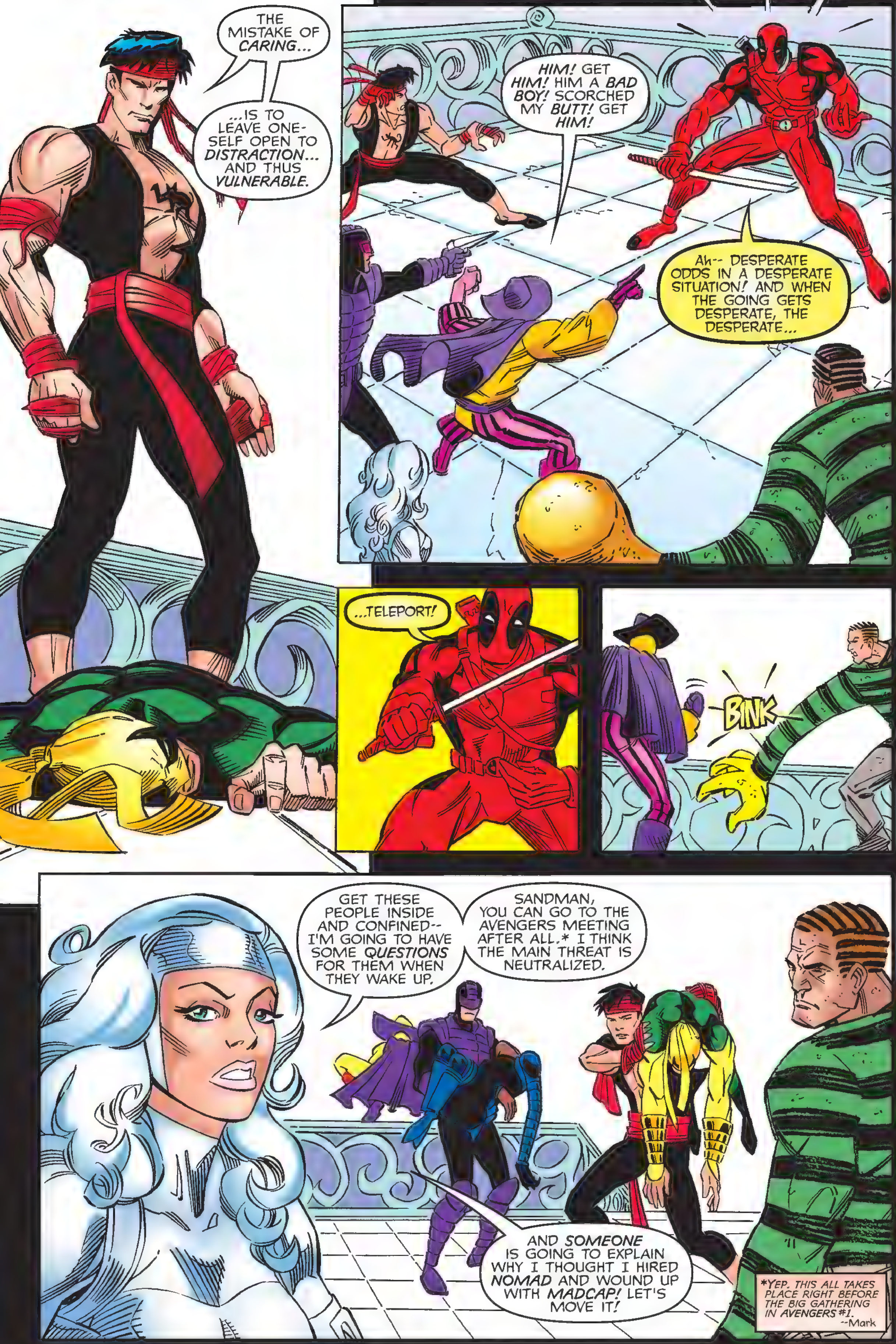

BLAM!
POK
MY GUN!
I'M IMPRESSED BY YOUR AIM, LADY.
KRUNK
HERE'S MINE.
POOM!
PACKOW
NICE, BUT I GUESS NO ONE TOLD YOU ABOUT MY *BIONIC ARM.*
Hmmm, THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE AS EASY AS I THOUGHT!

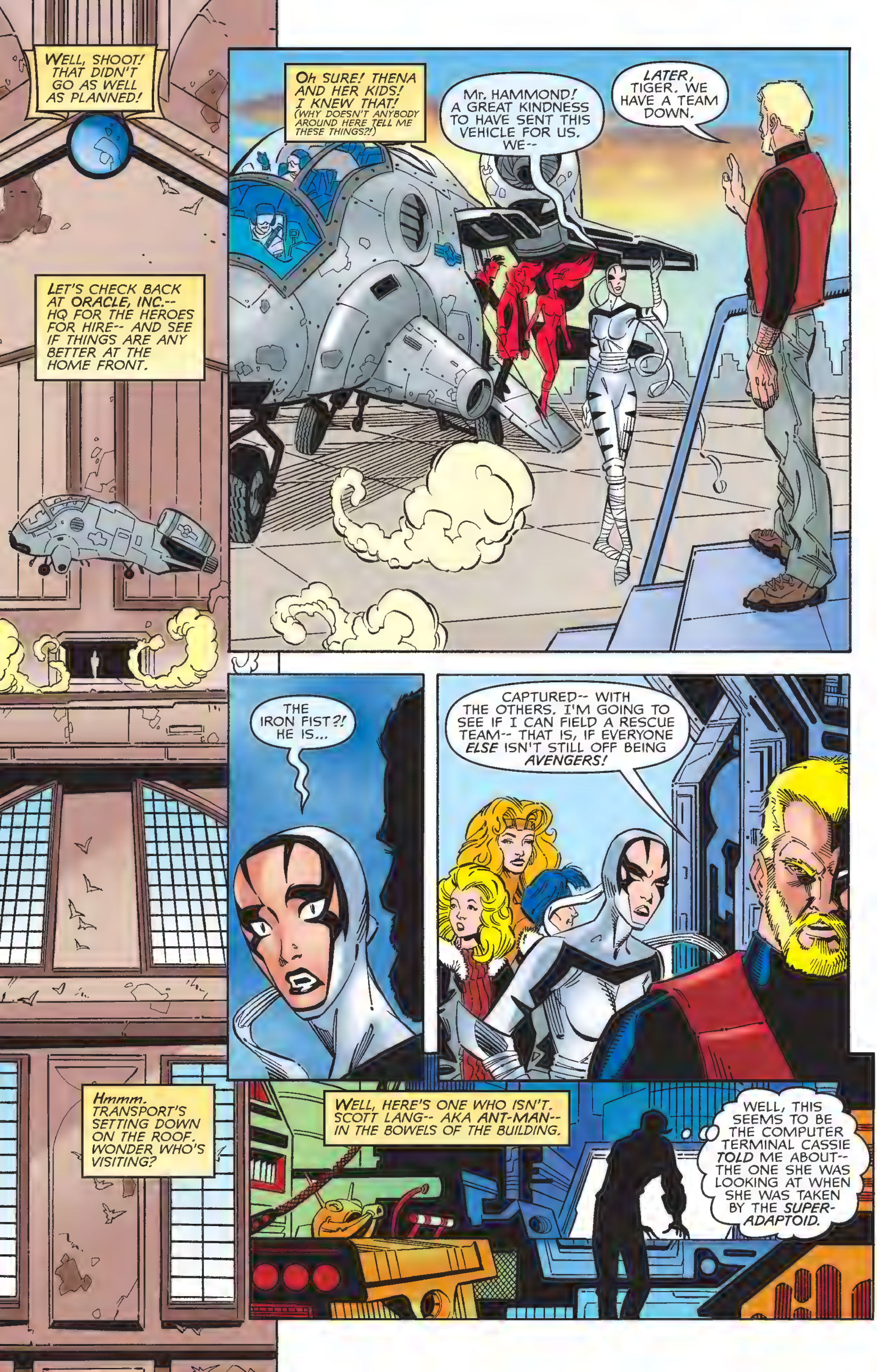

THEY HAVE STOOD SILENTLY SINCE THE BATTLE BEGAN-- TWO MARTIAL ARTS MASTERS, EYES LOCKED, WAITING, BREATHING... UNTIL...
HRAIII!
HAAAIII!
HA!
RIP!
HEUH!
THOK
TOK
KRAK
HEEEUUUHHH...!

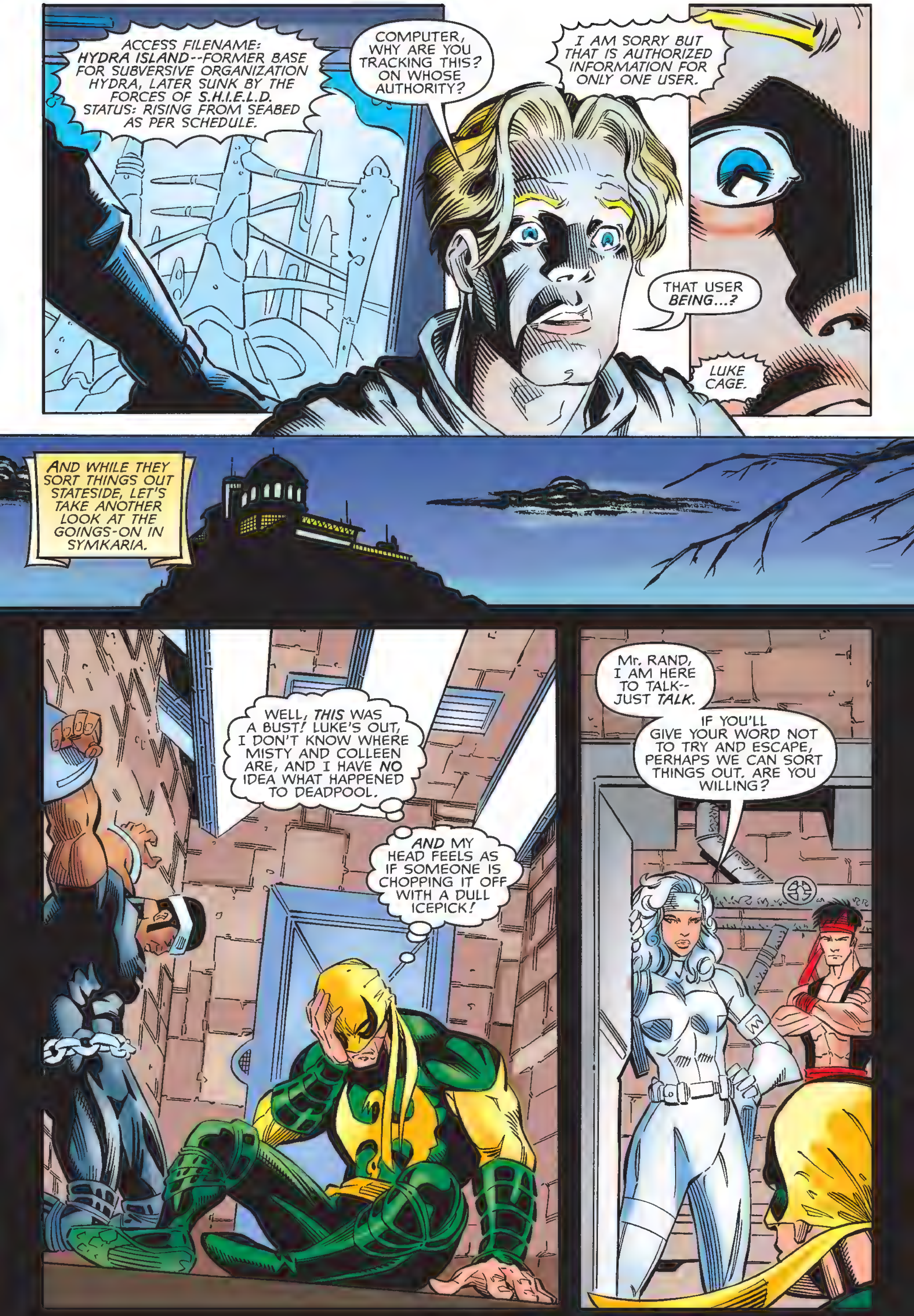

YEEP!
FWOOMP!
CHIANG!
SHANGK
FWOOMP!
YIELD, Ms. SABLE?
UNLIKELY, Ms. WING.
KRAK!
FINE.
SNIKT!

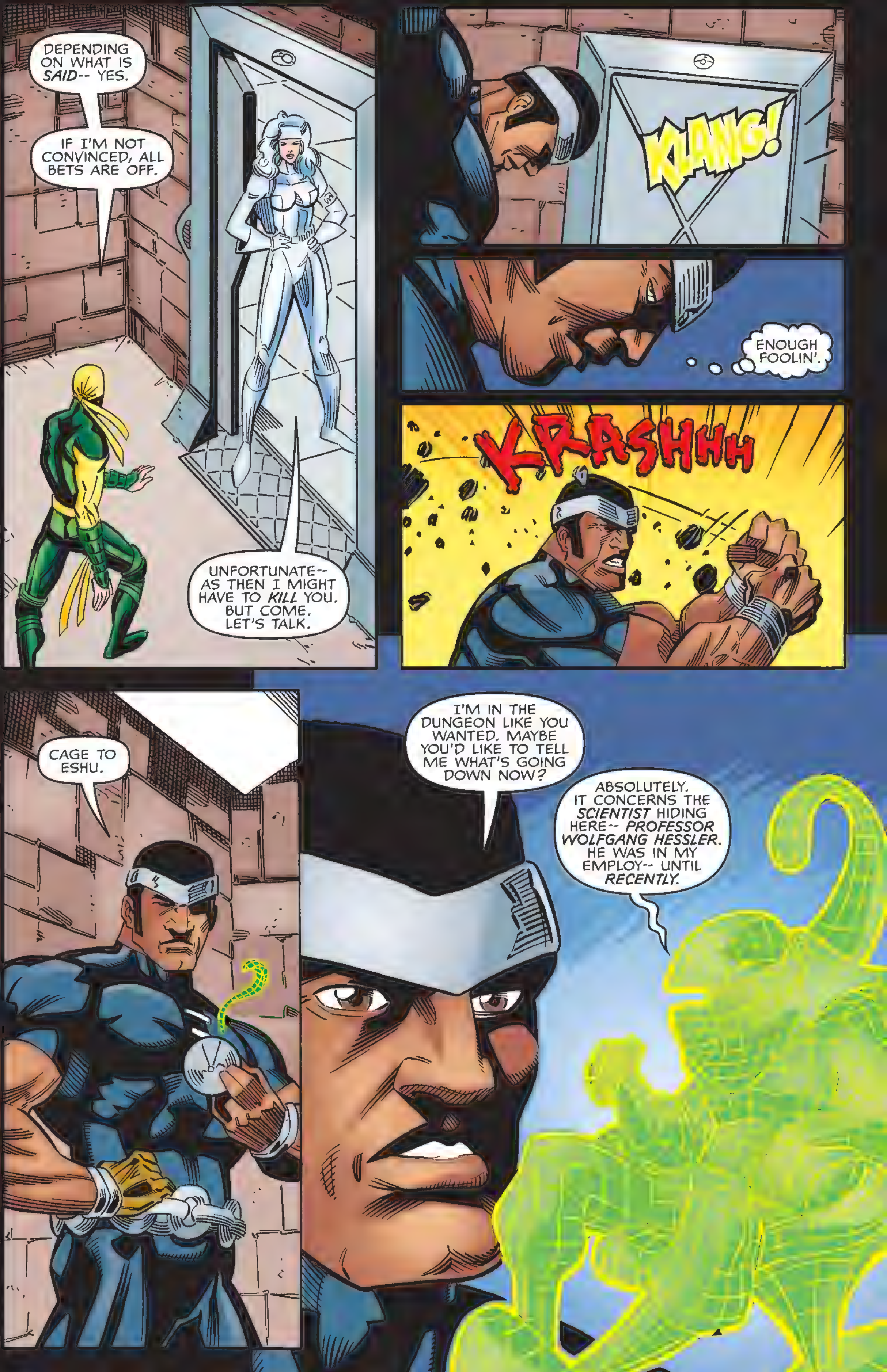

IF YOU THINK A MASS O'*CONCRETE* IS GONNA TAKE *ME* DOWN, SANDMAN...
...YOU'RE *WRONG!*
KRAKOOM
MORE'N *ONE* WAY O' FIGHTING YOU, PUNK!
MUSCLE DON'T MEAN *SQUAT* WHEN YA CAN'T *BREATHE!*
GET THE PICTURE?
YO, SABLE! I GOT A FREE HAND! WANT IT?
SHWOOMP

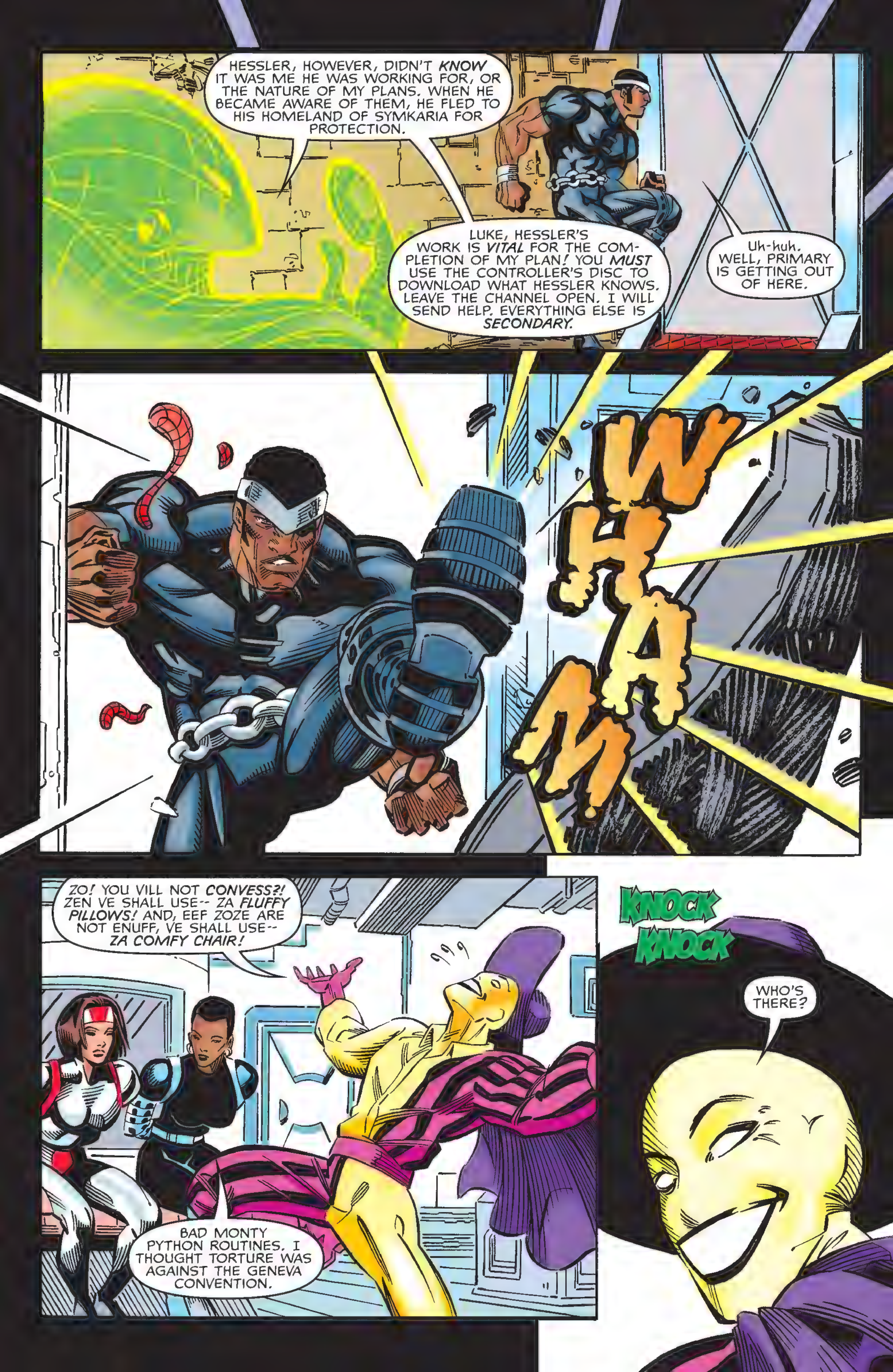

THANKS. I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
KRAK!
ZERO IN ON THE NEXT ONE.
THANKS, BUT THE *DISTRACTION* IS ALL I NEED.
THOK
MISTY!
THUD!
WOK!
CHUD!

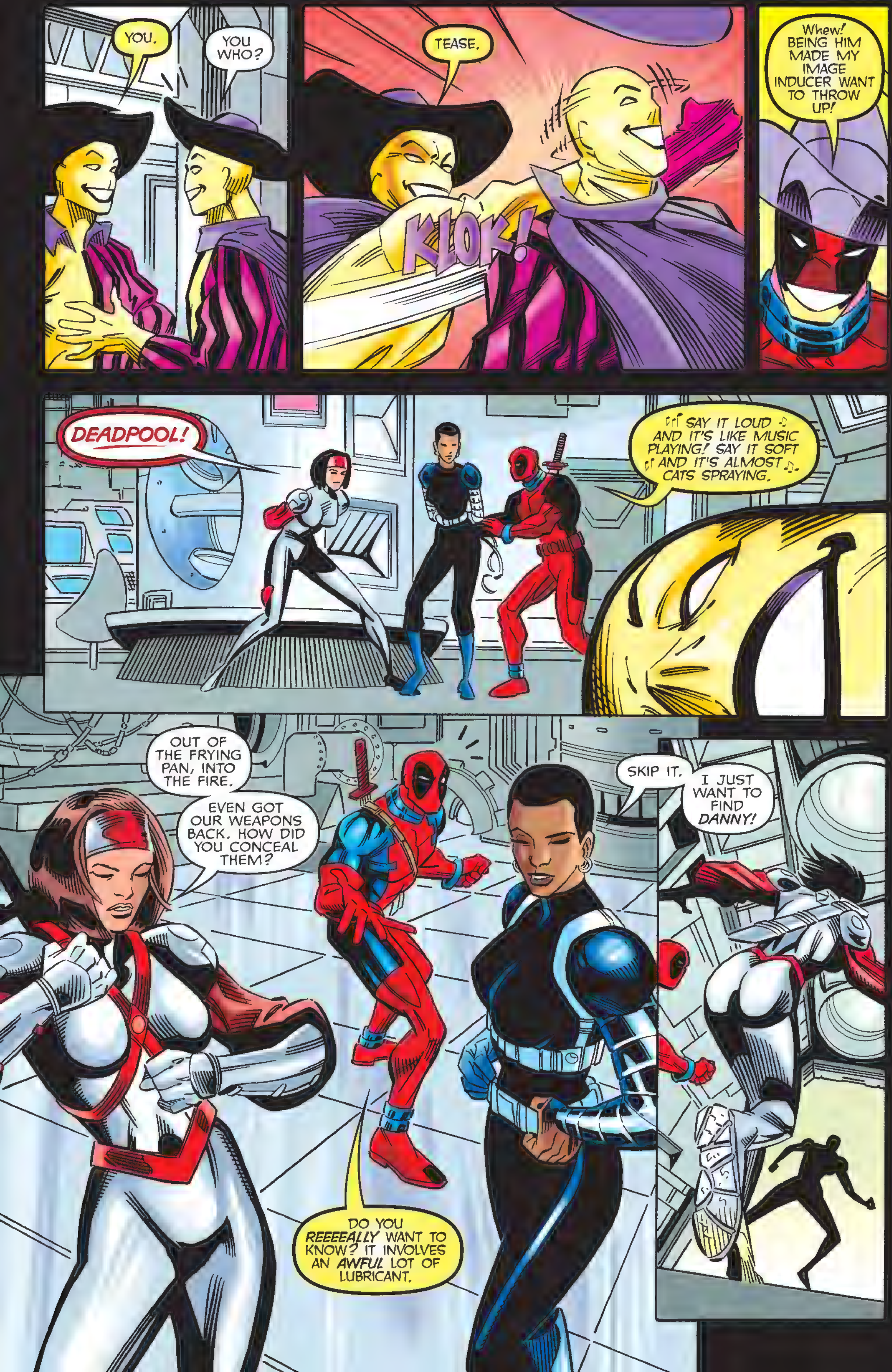

THE MISTAKE OF *CARING*...
...IS TO LEAVE ONESELF OPEN TO *DISTRACTION*... AND THUS *VULNERABLE.*
HIM! GET *HIM!* HIM A *BAD BOY!* SCORCHED MY *BUTT!* GET *HIM!*
Ah-- DESPERATE ODDS IN A DESPERATE SITUATION! AND WHEN THE GOING GETS DESPERATE, THE DESPERATE...
...TELEPORT!
BINK
GET THESE PEOPLE INSIDE AND CONFINED-- I'M GOING TO HAVE SOME *QUESTIONS* FOR THEM WHEN THEY WAKE UP.
SANDMAN, YOU CAN GO TO THE AVENGERS MEETING AFTER ALL.* I THINK THE MAIN THREAT IS NEUTRALIZED.
AND *SOMEONE* IS GOING TO EXPLAIN WHY I THOUGHT I HIRED *NOMAD* AND WOUND UP WITH *MADCAP!* LET'S MOVE IT!
*YEP. THIS ALL TAKES PLACE RIGHT BEFORE THE BIG GATHERING IN *AVENGERS* #1. --Mark

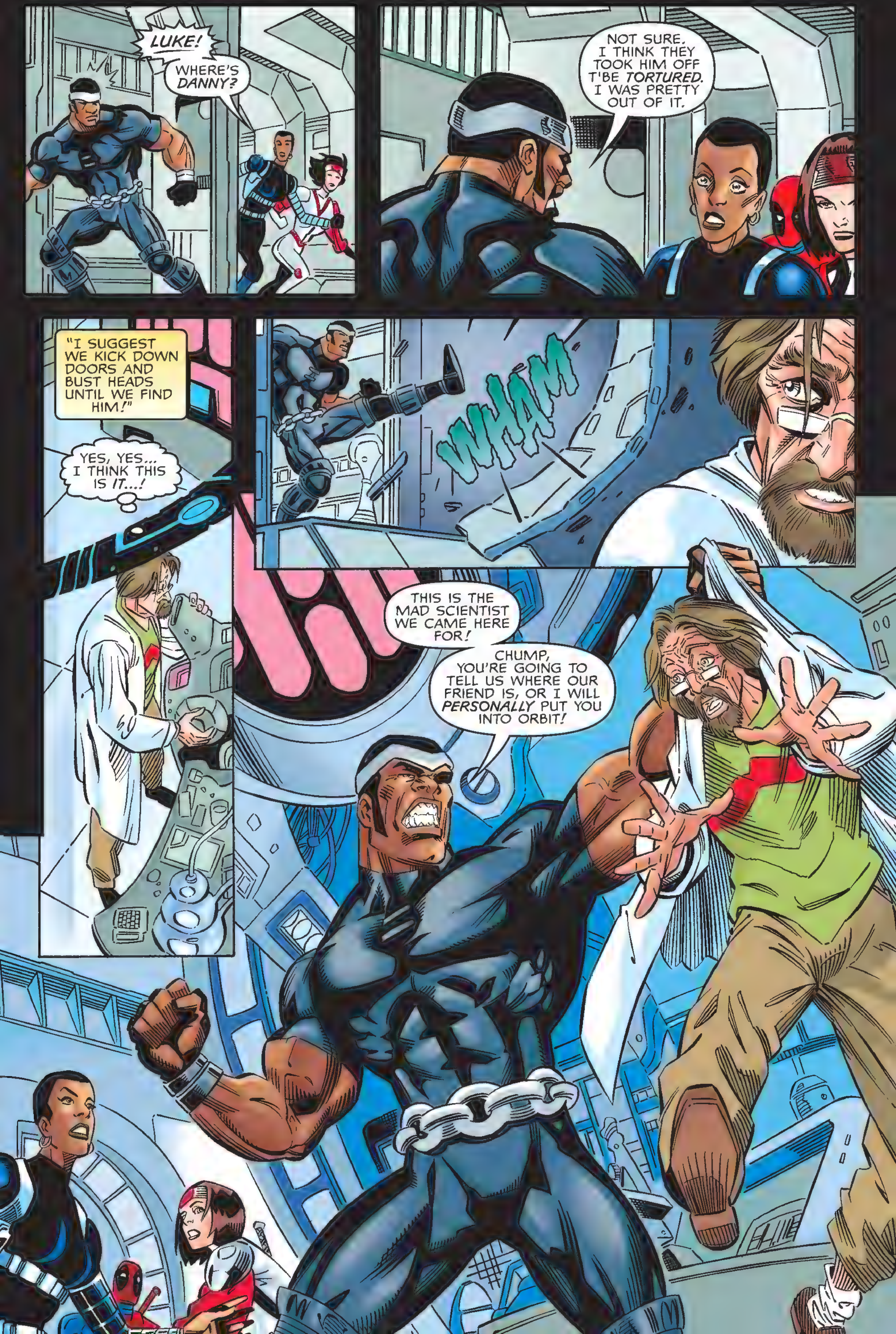

WELL, SHOOT! THAT DIDN'T GO AS WELL AS PLANNED!
LET'S CHECK BACK AT ORACLE, INC.-- HQ FOR THE HEROES FOR HIRE-- AND SEE IF THINGS ARE ANY BETTER AT THE HOME FRONT.
Hmmm. TRANSPORT'S SETTING DOWN ON THE ROOF. WONDER WHO'S VISITING?
Oh SURE! THENA AND HER KIDS! I KNEW THAT! (WHY DOESN'T ANYBODY AROUND HERE TELL ME THESE THINGS?!)
Mr. HAMMOND! A GREAT KINDNESS TO HAVE SENT THIS VEHICLE FOR US. WE--
LATER, TIGER. WE HAVE A TEAM DOWN.
THE IRON FIST?! HE IS...
CAPTURED-- WITH THE OTHERS. I'M GOING TO SEE IF I CAN FIELD A RESCUE TEAM-- THAT IS, IF EVERYONE ELSE ISN'T STILL OFF BEING AVENGERS!
WELL, HERE'S ONE WHO ISN'T. SCOTT LANG-- AKA ANT-MAN-- IN THE BOWELS OF THE BUILDING.
WELL, THIS SEEMS TO BE THE COMPUTER TERMINAL CASSIE TOLD ME ABOUT-- THE ONE SHE WAS LOOKING AT WHEN SHE WAS TAKEN BY THE SUPER-ADAPTOID.

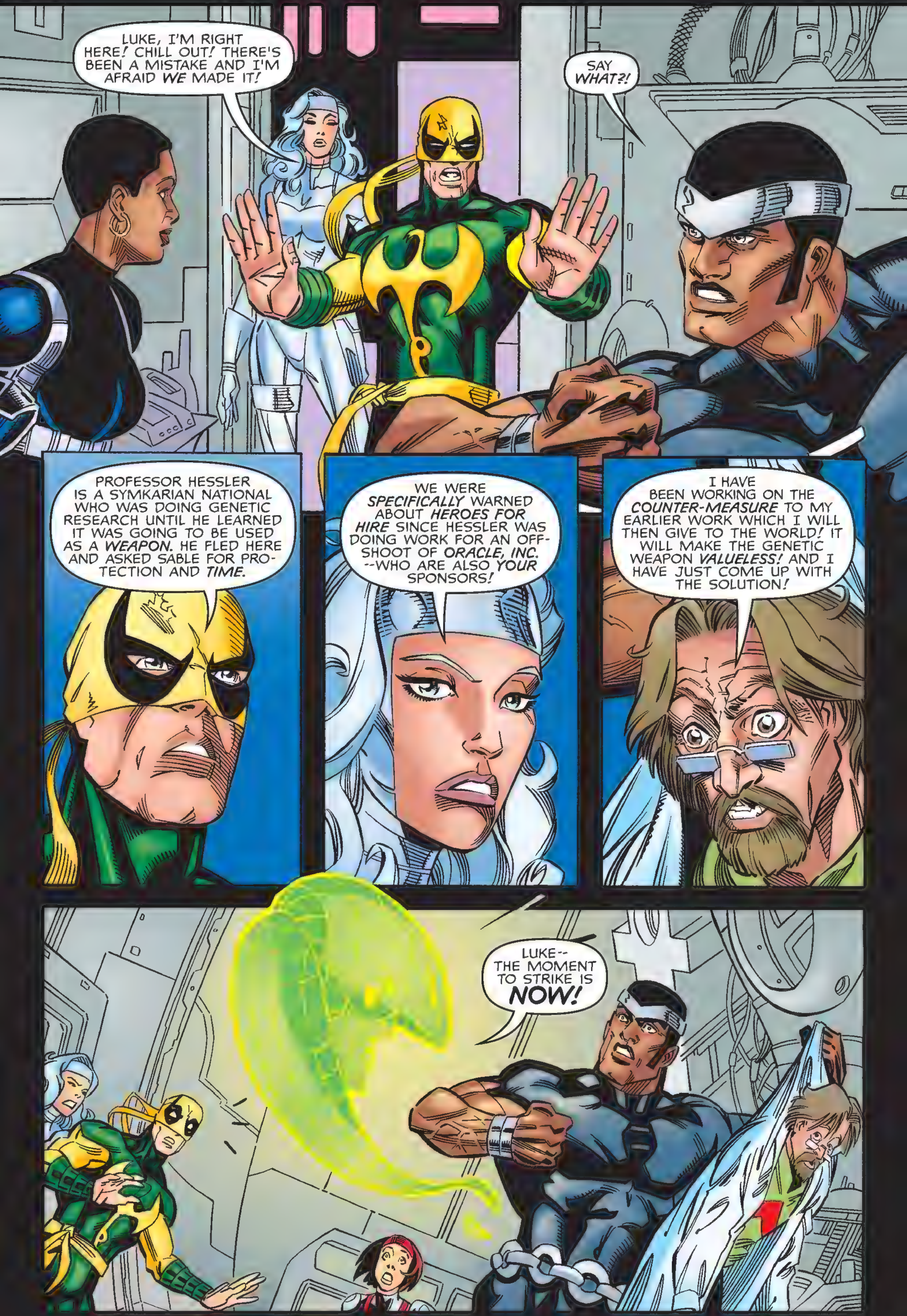

ACCESS FILENAME: **HYDRA ISLAND**--FORMER BASE FOR SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION HYDRA, LATER SUNK BY THE FORCES OF **S.H.I.E.L.D.** STATUS: RISING FROM SEABED AS PER SCHEDULE.
COMPUTER, WHY ARE YOU TRACKING THIS? ON WHOSE AUTHORITY?
I AM SORRY BUT THAT IS AUTHORIZED INFORMATION FOR ONLY ONE USER.
THAT USER *BEING...?*
LUKE CAGE.
AND WHILE THEY SORT THINGS OUT STATESIDE, LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE GOINGS-ON IN SYMKARIA.
WELL, *THIS* WAS A BUST! LUKE'S OUT, I DON'T KNOW WHERE MISTY AND COLLEEN ARE, AND I HAVE *NO* IDEA WHAT HAPPENED TO DEADPOOL.
AND MY HEAD FEELS AS IF SOMEONE IS CHOPPING IT OFF WITH A DULL ICEPICK!
Mr. RAND, I AM HERE TO TALK-- JUST *TALK.*
IF YOU'LL GIVE YOUR WORD NOT TO TRY AND ESCAPE, PERHAPS WE CAN SORT THINGS OUT. ARE YOU WILLING?

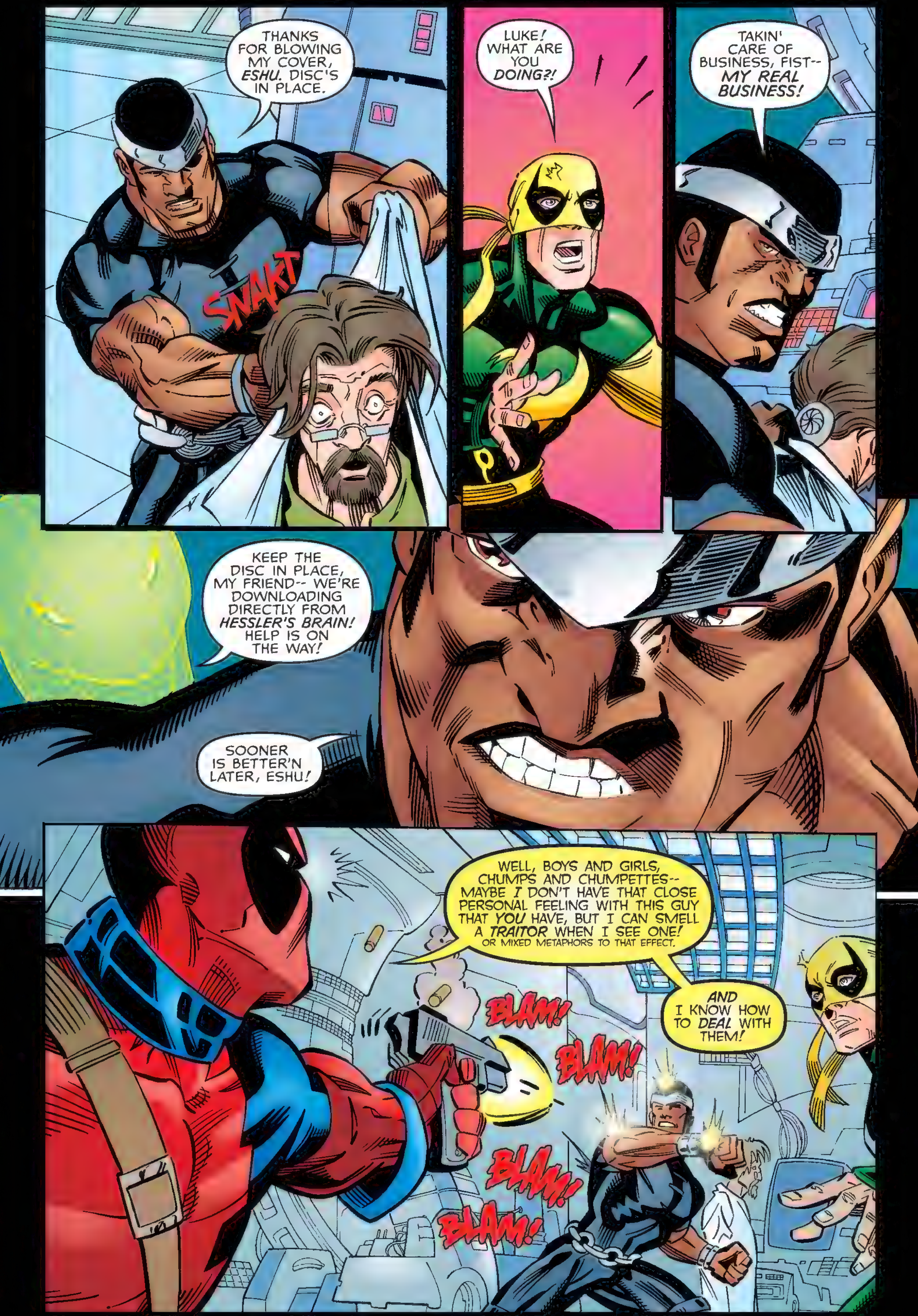

DEPENDING ON WHAT IS *SAID*-- YES.
IF I'M NOT CONVINCED, ALL BETS ARE OFF.
UNFORTUNATE-- AS THEN I MIGHT HAVE TO *KILL* YOU. BUT COME. LET'S TALK.
KLANG!
ENOUGH FOOLIN'.
KRASHHH
CAGE TO ESHU.
I'M IN THE DUNGEON LIKE YOU WANTED. MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING DOWN NOW?
ABSOLUTELY. IT CONCERNS THE *SCIENTIST* HIDING HERE-- *PROFESSOR WOLFGANG HESSLER*. HE WAS IN MY EMPLOY-- UNTIL *RECENTLY*.

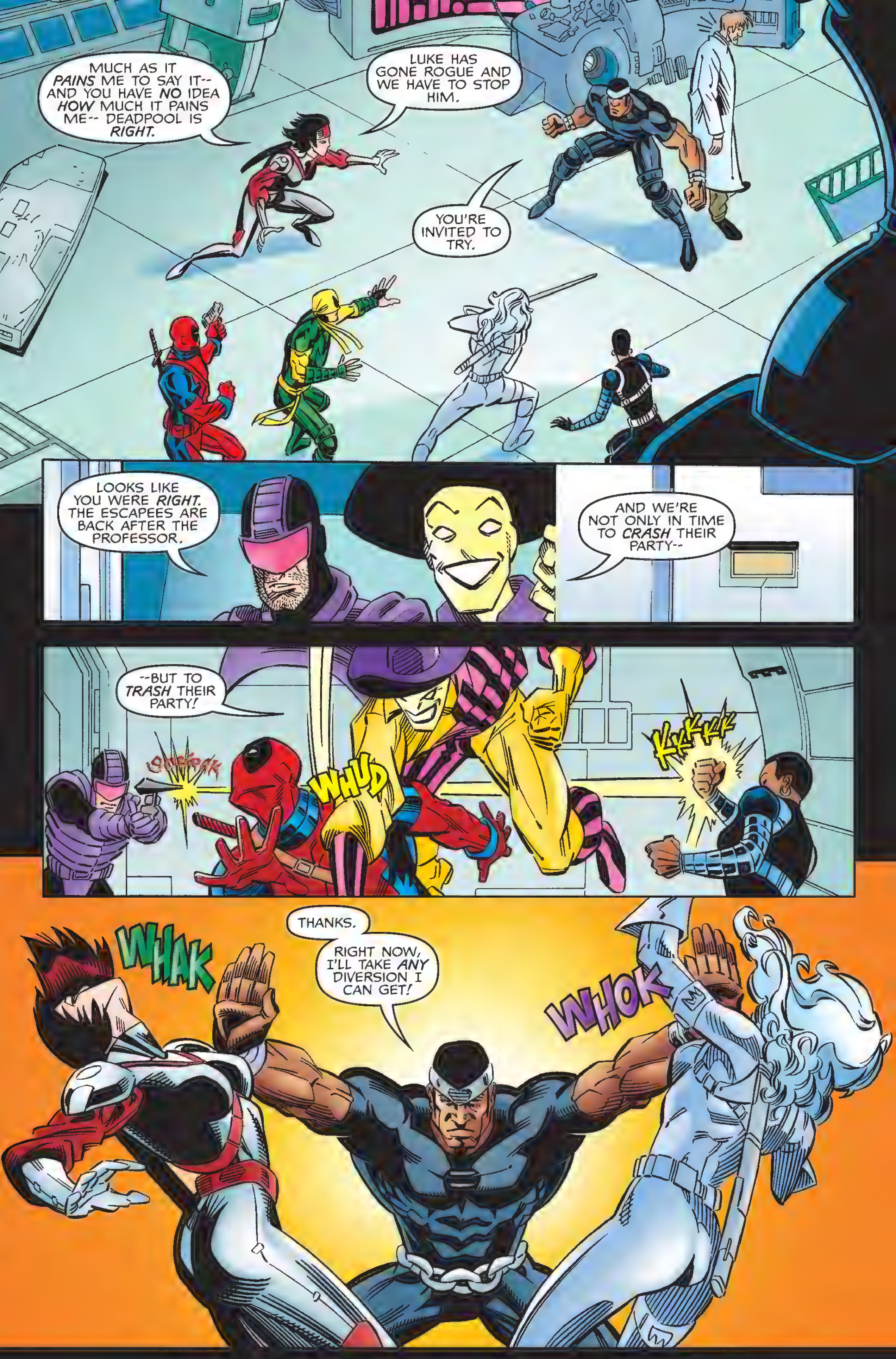

HESSLER, HOWEVER, DIDN'T *KNOW* IT WAS ME HE WAS WORKING FOR, OR THE NATURE OF MY PLANS. WHEN HE BECAME AWARE OF THEM, HE FLED TO HIS HOMELAND OF SYMKARIA FOR PROTECTION.
LUKE, HESSLER'S WORK IS *VITAL* FOR THE COMPLETION OF MY PLAN! YOU *MUST* USE THE CONTROLLER'S DISC TO DOWNLOAD WHAT HESSLER KNOWS. LEAVE THE CHANNEL OPEN. I WILL SEND HELP. EVERYTHING ELSE IS *SECONDARY.*
Uh-huh. WELL, PRIMARY IS GETTING OUT OF HERE.
WHAM
ZO! YOU VILL NOT *CONVESS?!* ZEN VE SHALL USE-- ZA *FLUFFY PILLOWS!* AND, EEF ZOZE ARE NOT ENUFF, VE SHALL USE-- *ZA COMFY CHAIR!*
BAD MONTY PYTHON ROUTINES. I THOUGHT TORTURE WAS AGAINST THE GENEVA CONVENTION.
KNOCK KNOCK
WHO'S THERE?

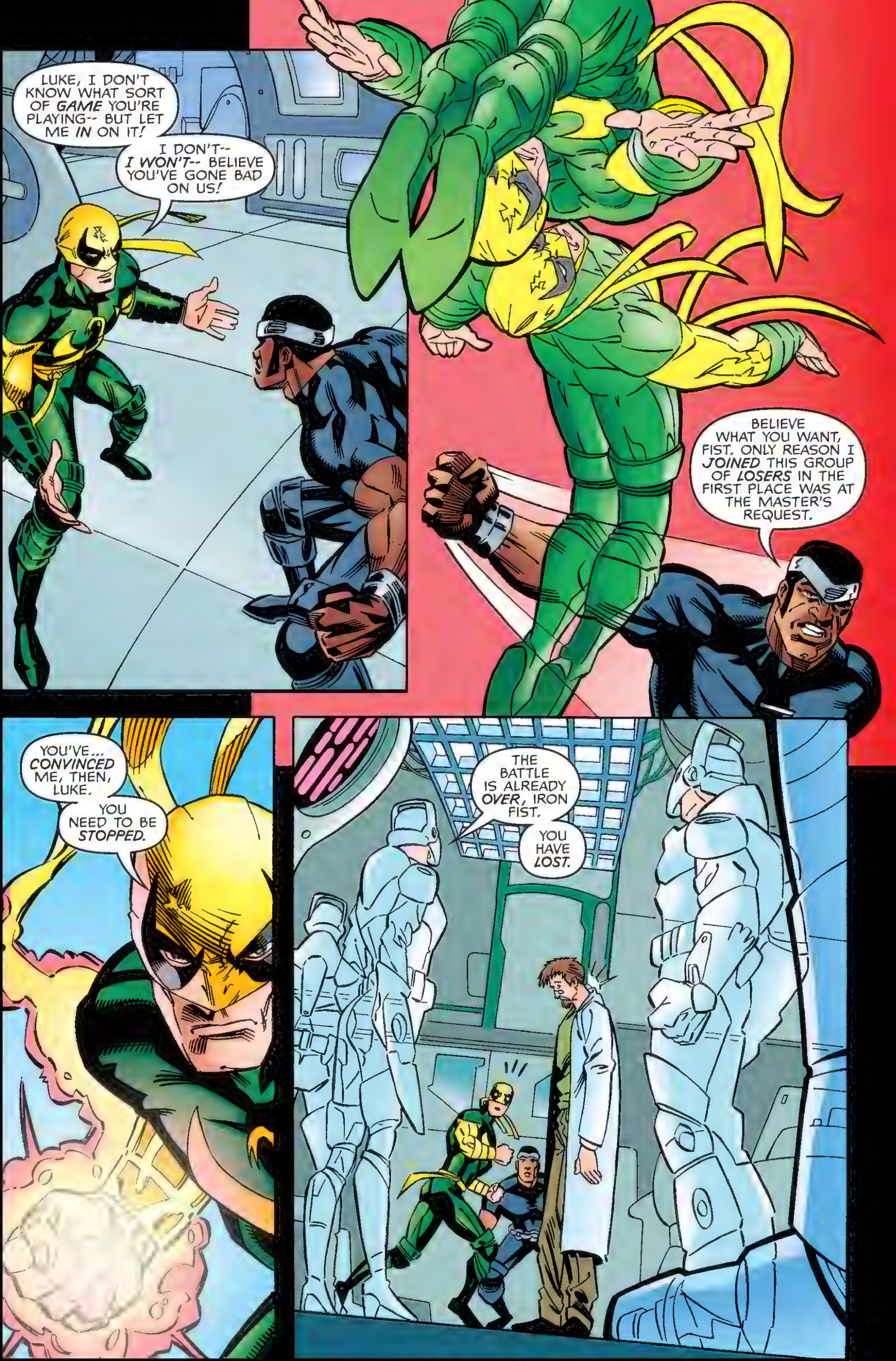

YOU.
YOU WHO?
TEASE.
KLOK!
Whew! BEING HIM MADE MY IMAGE INDUCER WANT TO THROW UP!
DEADPOOL!
♫ SAY IT LOUD ♫ AND IT'S LIKE MUSIC PLAYING! SAY IT SOFT ♫ AND IT'S ALMOST ♫ CATS SPRAYING.
OUT OF THE FRYING PAN, INTO THE FIRE.
EVEN GOT OUR WEAPONS BACK. HOW DID YOU CONCEAL THEM?
DO YOU *REEEEALLY* WANT TO KNOW? IT INVOLVES AN *AWFUL* LOT OF LUBRICANT.
SKIP IT.
I JUST WANT TO FIND *DANNY!*

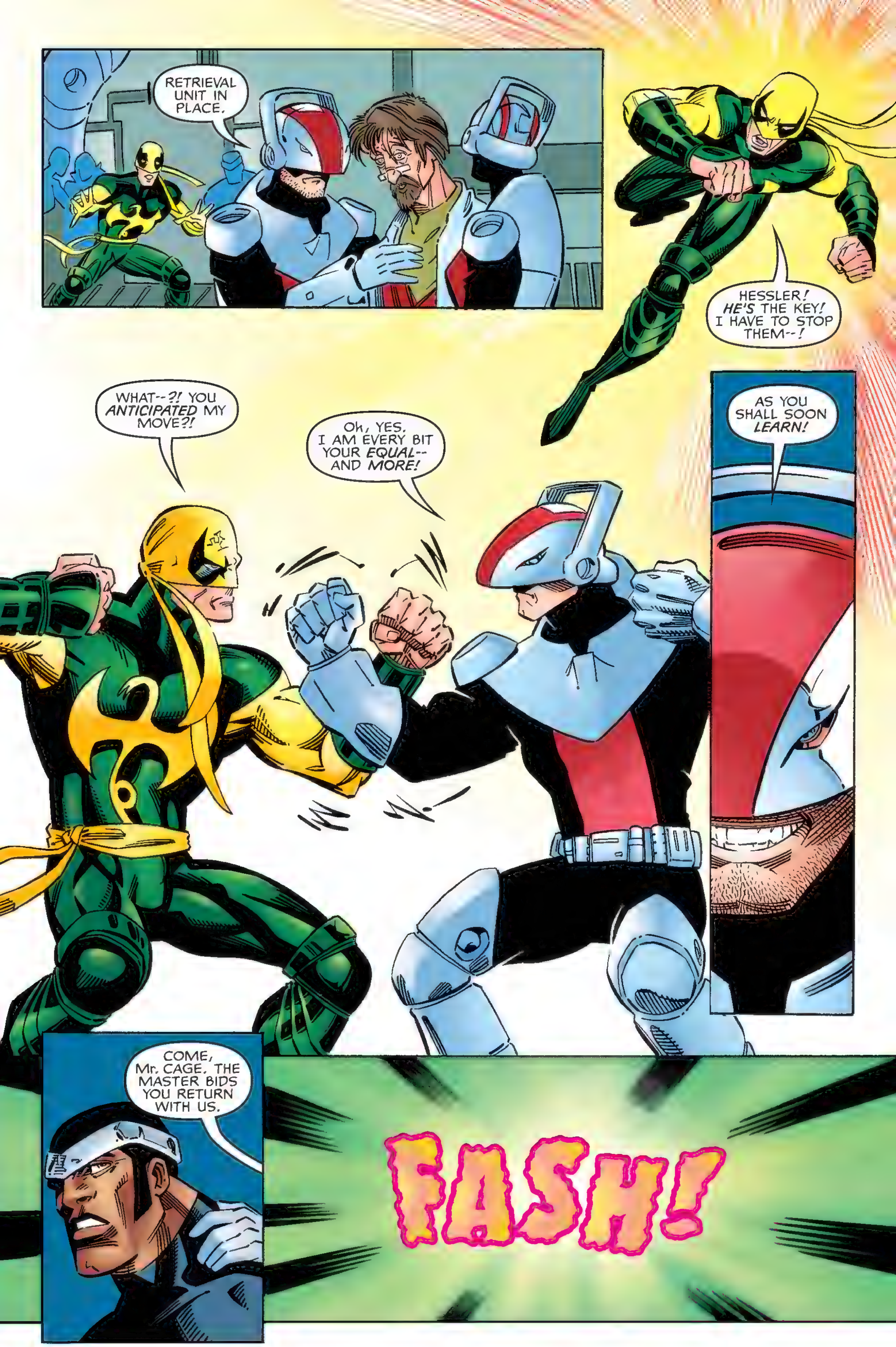

LUKE!
WHERE'S DANNY?
NOT SURE. I THINK THEY TOOK HIM OFF T'BE TORTURED. I WAS PRETTY OUT OF IT.
"I SUGGEST WE KICK DOWN DOORS AND BUST HEADS UNTIL WE FIND HIM!"
YES, YES... I THINK THIS IS IT...!
WHAM
THIS IS THE MAD SCIENTIST WE CAME HERE FOR!
CHUMP, YOU'RE GOING TO TELL US WHERE OUR FRIEND IS, OR I WILL PERSONALLY PUT YOU INTO ORBIT!

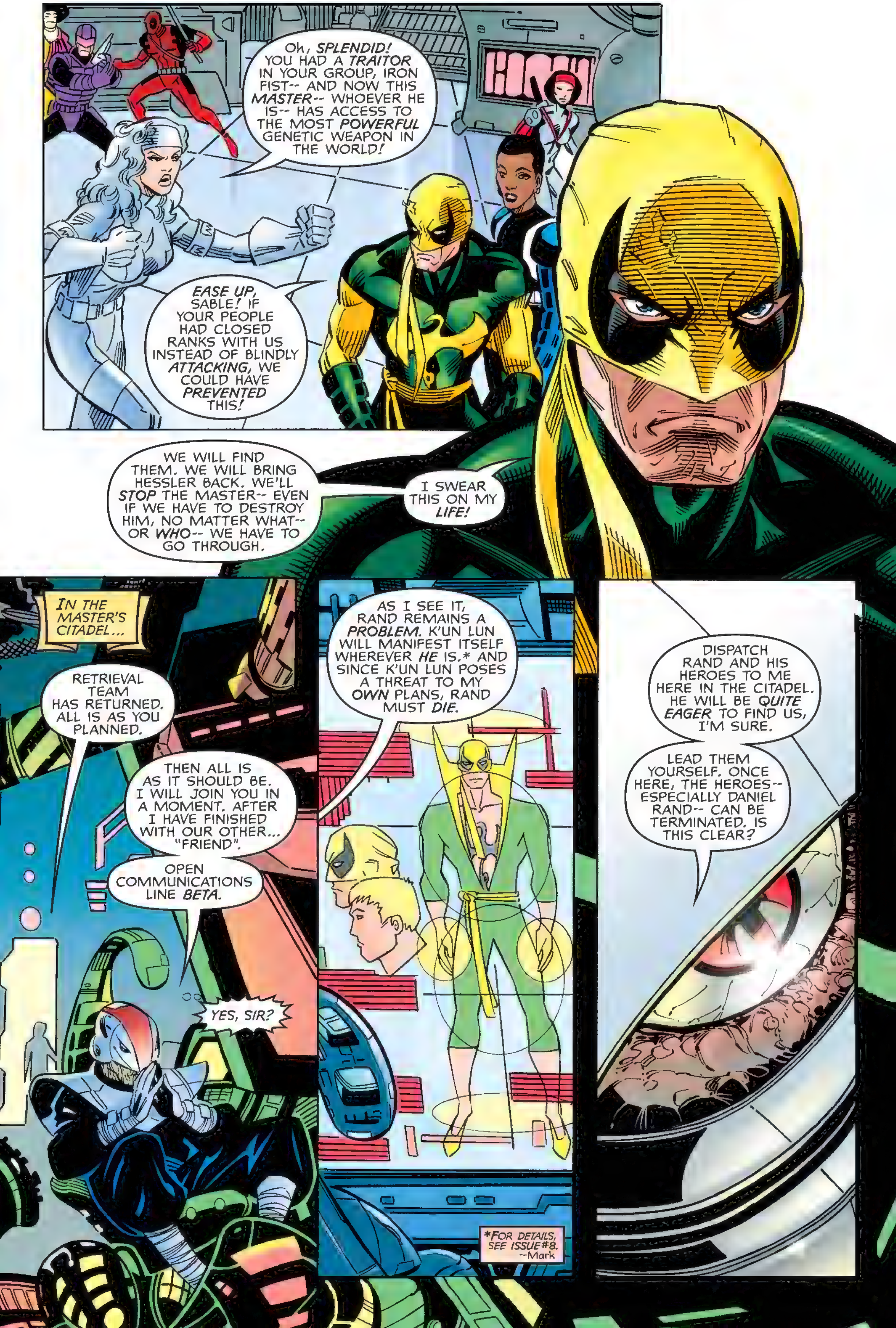

LUKE, I'M RIGHT HERE! CHILL OUT! THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE AND I'M AFRAID *WE* MADE IT!
SAY *WHAT?!*
PROFESSOR HESSLER IS A SYMKARIAN NATIONAL WHO WAS DOING GENETIC RESEARCH UNTIL HE LEARNED IT WAS GOING TO BE USED AS A *WEAPON.* HE FLED HERE AND ASKED SABLE FOR PROTECTION AND *TIME.*
WE WERE *SPECIFICALLY* WARNED ABOUT *HEROES FOR HIRE* SINCE HESSLER WAS DOING WORK FOR AN OFFSHOOT OF *ORACLE, INC.* --WHO ARE ALSO *YOUR* SPONSORS!
I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THE *COUNTER-MEASURE* TO MY EARLIER WORK WHICH I WILL THEN GIVE TO THE WORLD! IT WILL MAKE THE GENETIC WEAPON *VALUELESS!* AND I HAVE JUST COME UP WITH THE SOLUTION!
LUKE-- THE MOMENT TO STRIKE IS **NOW!**

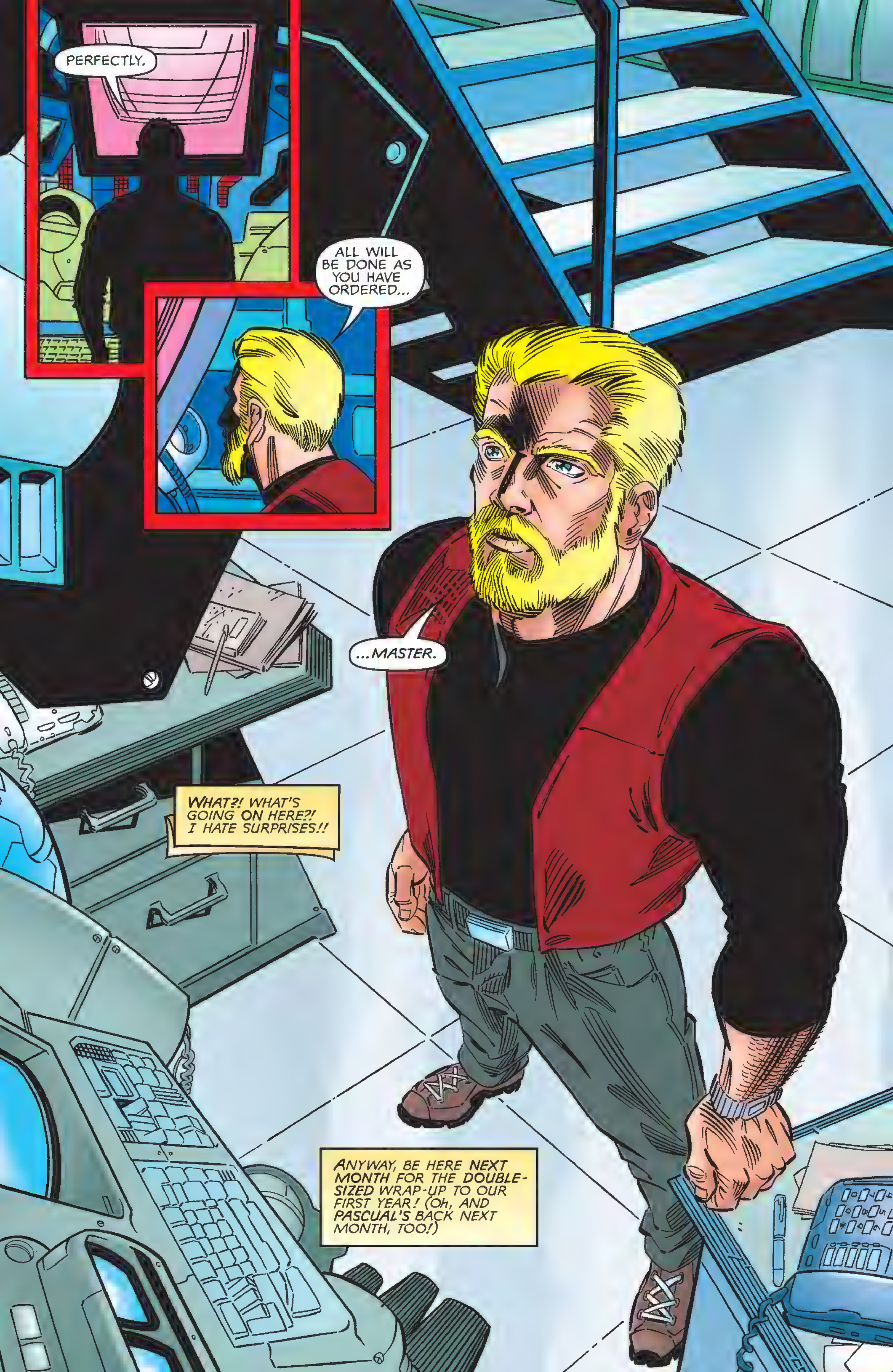

THANKS FOR BLOWING MY COVER, *ESHU.* DISC'S IN PLACE.
SNAKT
LUKE! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!*
TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS, FIST-- *MY REAL BUSINESS!*
KEEP THE DISC IN PLACE, MY FRIEND-- WE'RE DOWNLOADING DIRECTLY FROM *HESSLER'S BRAIN!* HELP IS ON THE WAY!
SOONER IS BETTER'N LATER, ESHU!
WELL, BOYS AND GIRLS, CHUMPS AND CHUMPETTES-- MAYBE *I* DON'T HAVE THAT CLOSE PERSONAL FEELING WITH THIS GUY THAT *YOU* HAVE, BUT I CAN SMELL A *TRAITOR* WHEN I SEE ONE! OR MIXED METAPHORS TO THAT EFFECT.
AND I KNOW HOW TO *DEAL* WITH THEM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

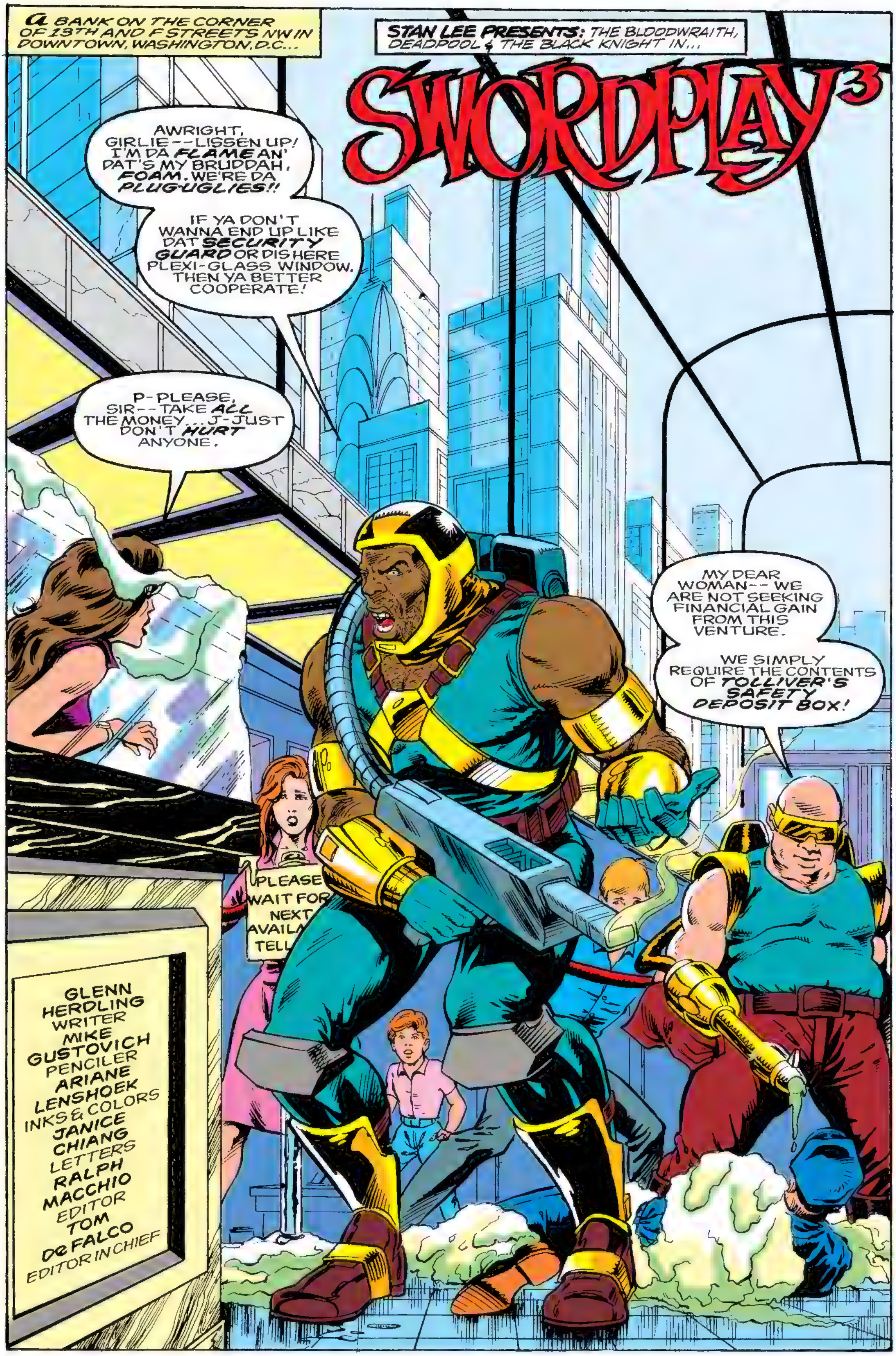

MUCH AS IT *PAINS* ME TO SAY IT-- AND YOU HAVE ***NO*** IDEA ***HOW*** MUCH IT PAINS ME-- DEADPOOL IS ***RIGHT.***
LUKE HAS GONE ROGUE AND WE HAVE TO STOP HIM.
YOU'RE INVITED TO TRY.
LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE *RIGHT.* THE ESCAPEES ARE BACK AFTER THE PROFESSOR.
AND WE'RE NOT ONLY IN TIME TO *CRASH* THEIR PARTY--
--BUT TO *TRASH* THEIR PARTY!
WHUD
KKKKK
WHAK
THANKS.
RIGHT NOW, I'LL TAKE *ANY* DIVERSION I CAN GET!
WHOK

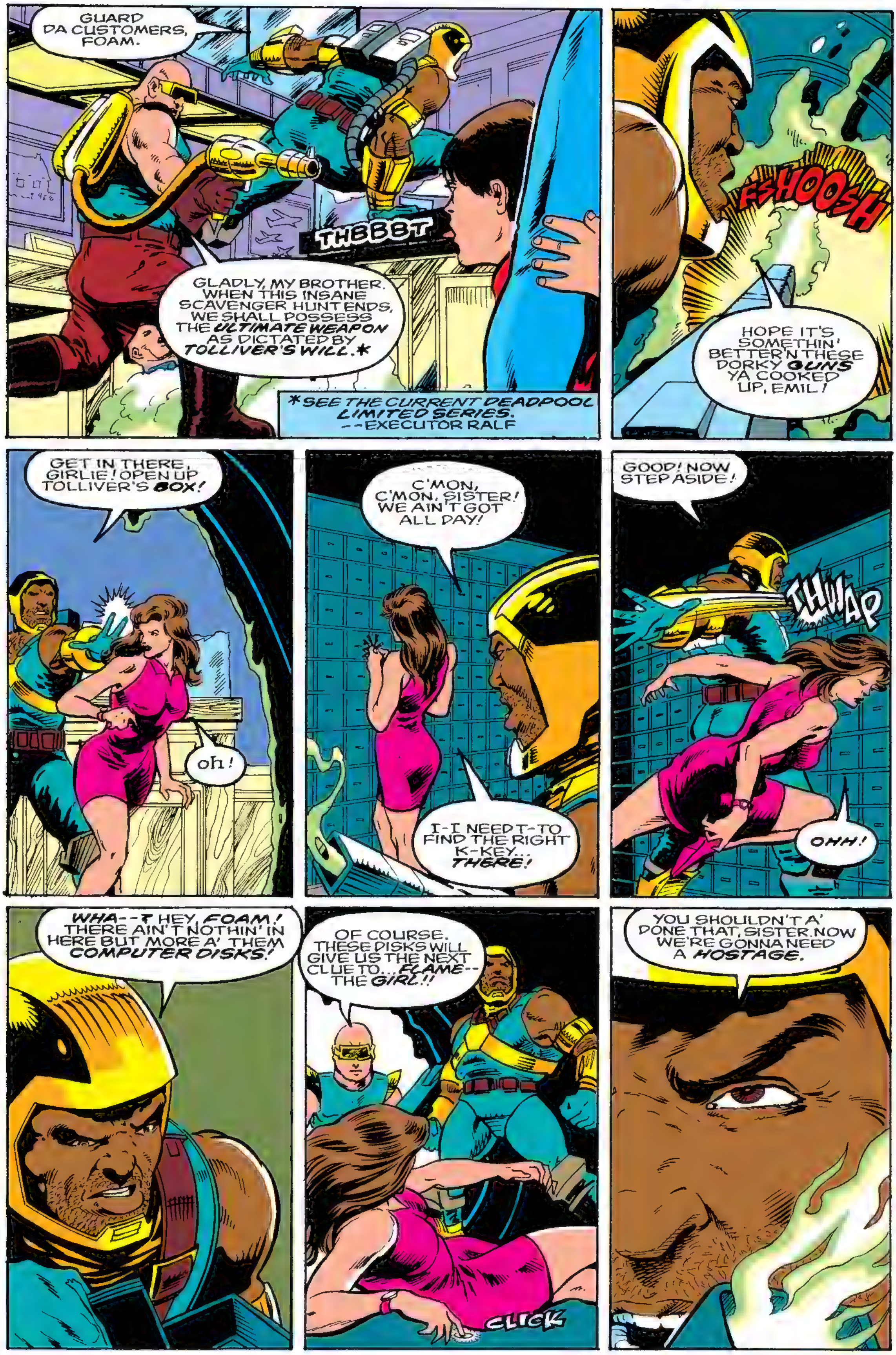

LUKE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF *GAME* YOU'RE PLAYING-- BUT LET ME *IN* ON IT!
I DON'T-- *I WON'T*-- BELIEVE YOU'VE GONE BAD ON US!
BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT, FIST. ONLY REASON I *JOINED* THIS GROUP OF *LOSERS* IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS AT THE MASTER'S REQUEST.
YOU'VE... *CONVINCED* ME, THEN, LUKE.
YOU NEED TO BE *STOPPED*.
THE BATTLE IS ALREADY *OVER*, IRON FIST.
YOU HAVE *LOST*.

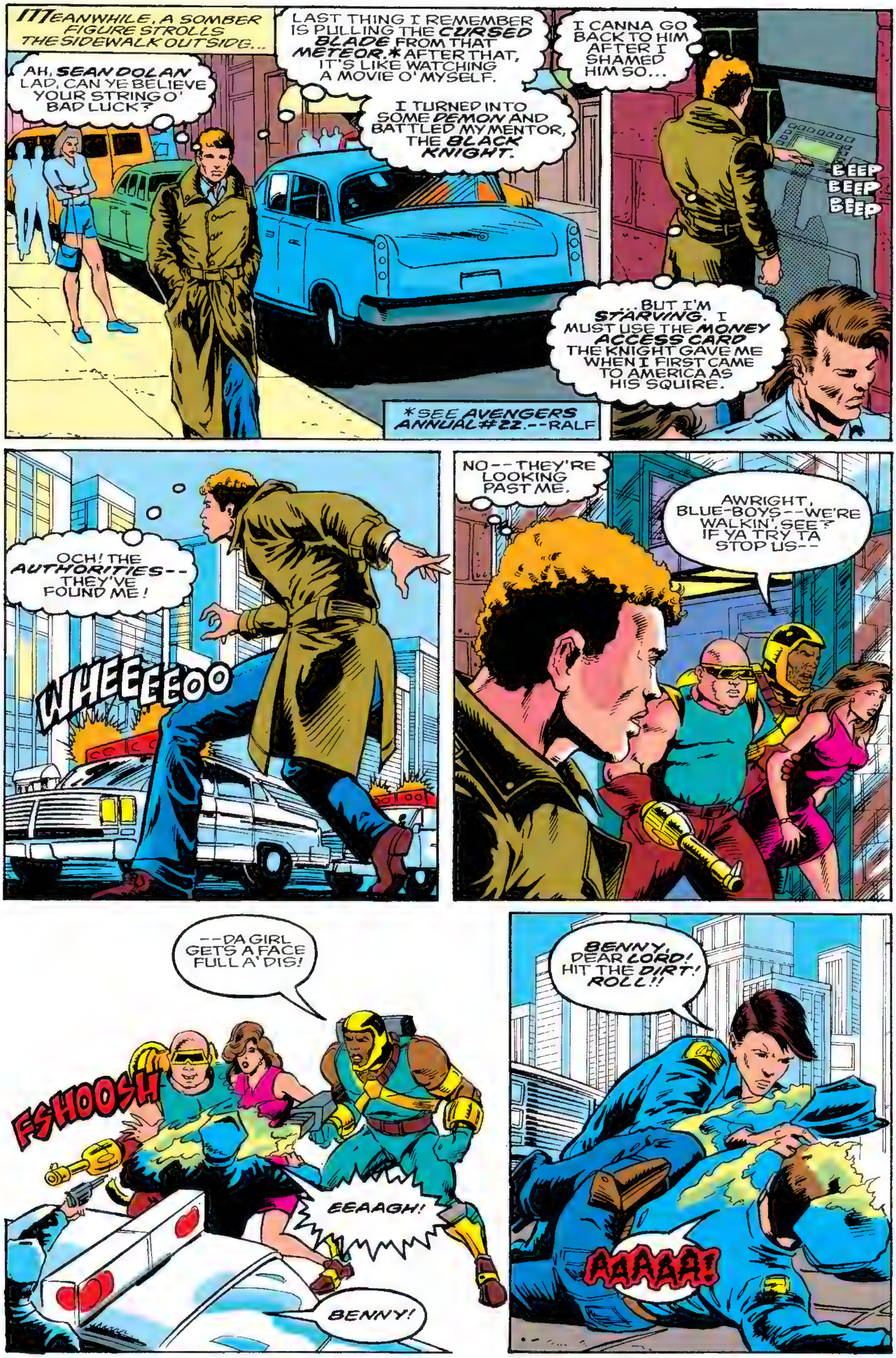

RETRIEVAL UNIT IN PLACE.
HESSLER! *HE'S* THE KEY! I HAVE TO STOP THEM--!
WHAT--?! YOU *ANTICIPATED* MY MOVE?!
Oh, YES. I AM EVERY BIT YOUR *EQUAL*-- AND *MORE!*
AS YOU SHALL SOON *LEARN!*
COME, Mr. CAGE. THE MASTER BIDS YOU RETURN WITH US.
FASH!

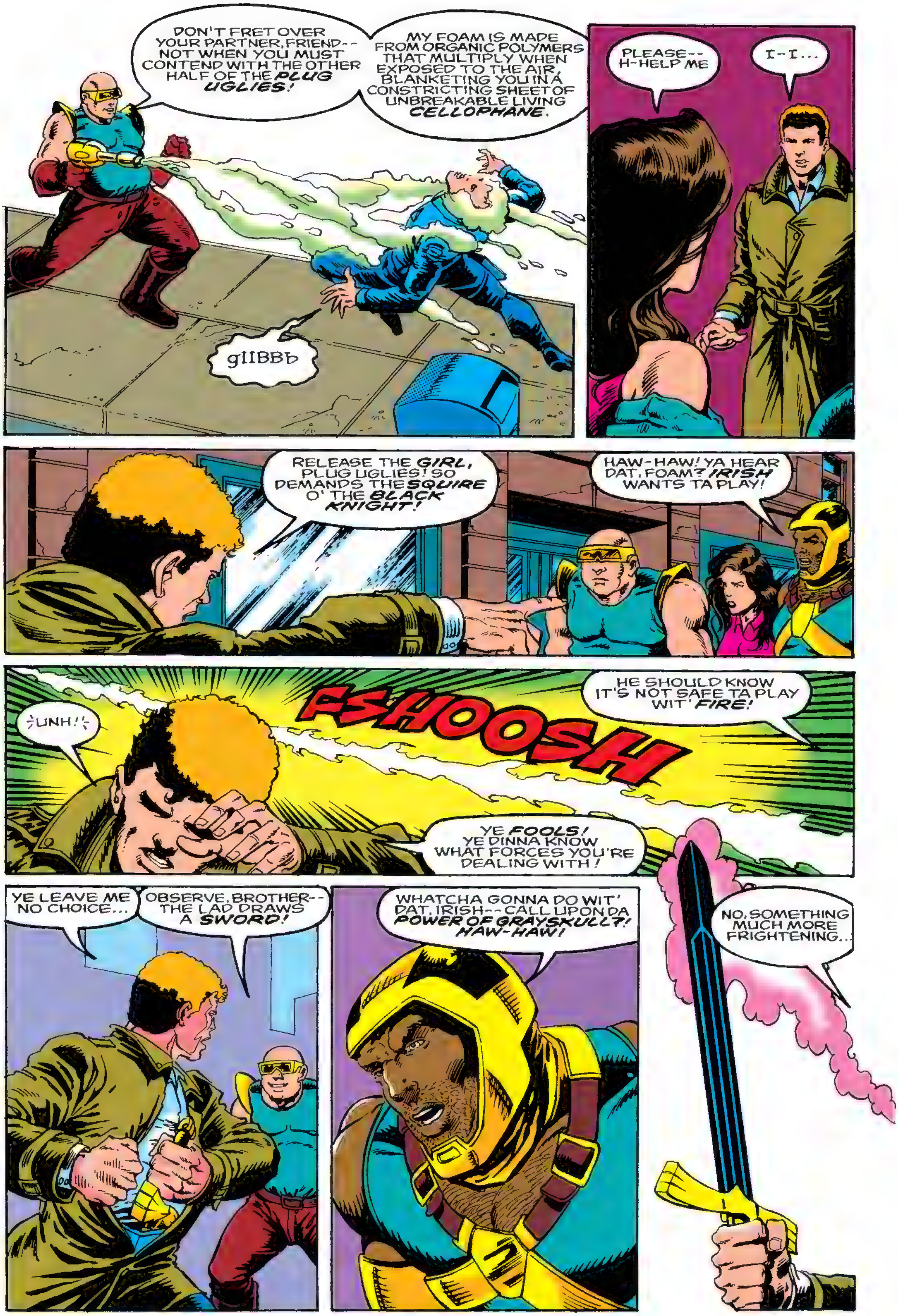

Oh, SPLENDID! YOU HAD A TRAITOR IN YOUR GROUP, IRON FIST-- AND NOW THIS MASTER-- WHOEVER HE IS-- HAS ACCESS TO THE MOST POWERFUL GENETIC WEAPON IN THE WORLD!
EASE UP, SABLE! IF YOUR PEOPLE HAD CLOSED RANKS WITH US INSTEAD OF BLINDLY ATTACKING, WE COULD HAVE PREVENTED THIS!
WE WILL FIND THEM. WE WILL BRING HESSLER BACK. WE'LL STOP THE MASTER-- EVEN IF WE HAVE TO DESTROY HIM, NO MATTER WHAT-- OR WHO-- WE HAVE TO GO THROUGH.
I SWEAR THIS ON MY LIFE!
IN THE MASTER'S CITADEL...
RETRIEVAL TEAM HAS RETURNED. ALL IS AS YOU PLANNED.
THEN ALL IS AS IT SHOULD BE. I WILL JOIN YOU IN A MOMENT. AFTER I HAVE FINISHED WITH OUR OTHER... "FRIEND".
OPEN COMMUNICATIONS LINE BETA.
YES, SIR?
AS I SEE IT, RAND REMAINS A PROBLEM. K'UN LUN WILL MANIFEST ITSELF WHEREVER HE IS.* AND SINCE K'UN LUN POSES A THREAT TO MY OWN PLANS, RAND MUST DIE.
*FOR DETAILS, SEE ISSUE #8. --Mark
DISPATCH RAND AND HIS HEROES TO ME HERE IN THE CITADEL. HE WILL BE QUITE EAGER TO FIND US, I'M SURE.
LEAD THEM YOURSELF. ONCE HERE, THE HEROES-- ESPECIALLY DANIEL RAND-- CAN BE TERMINATED. IS THIS CLEAR?

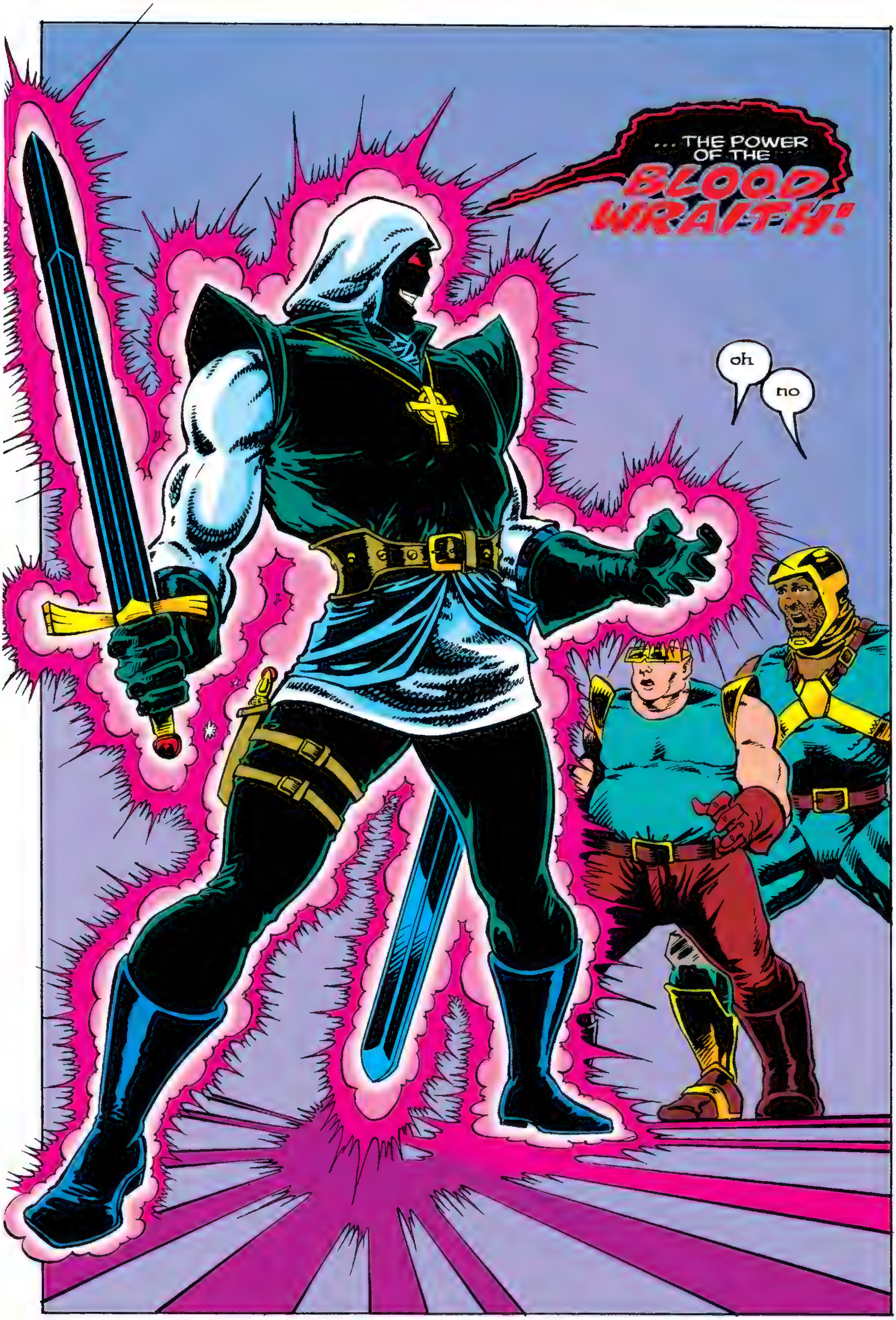

PERFECTLY.
ALL WILL BE DONE AS YOU HAVE ORDERED...
...MASTER.
WHAT?! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?! I HATE SURPRISES!!
ANYWAY, BE HERE NEXT MONTH FOR THE DOUBLE-SIZED WRAP-UP TO OUR FIRST YEAR! (Oh, AND PASCUAL'S BACK NEXT MONTH, TOO!)

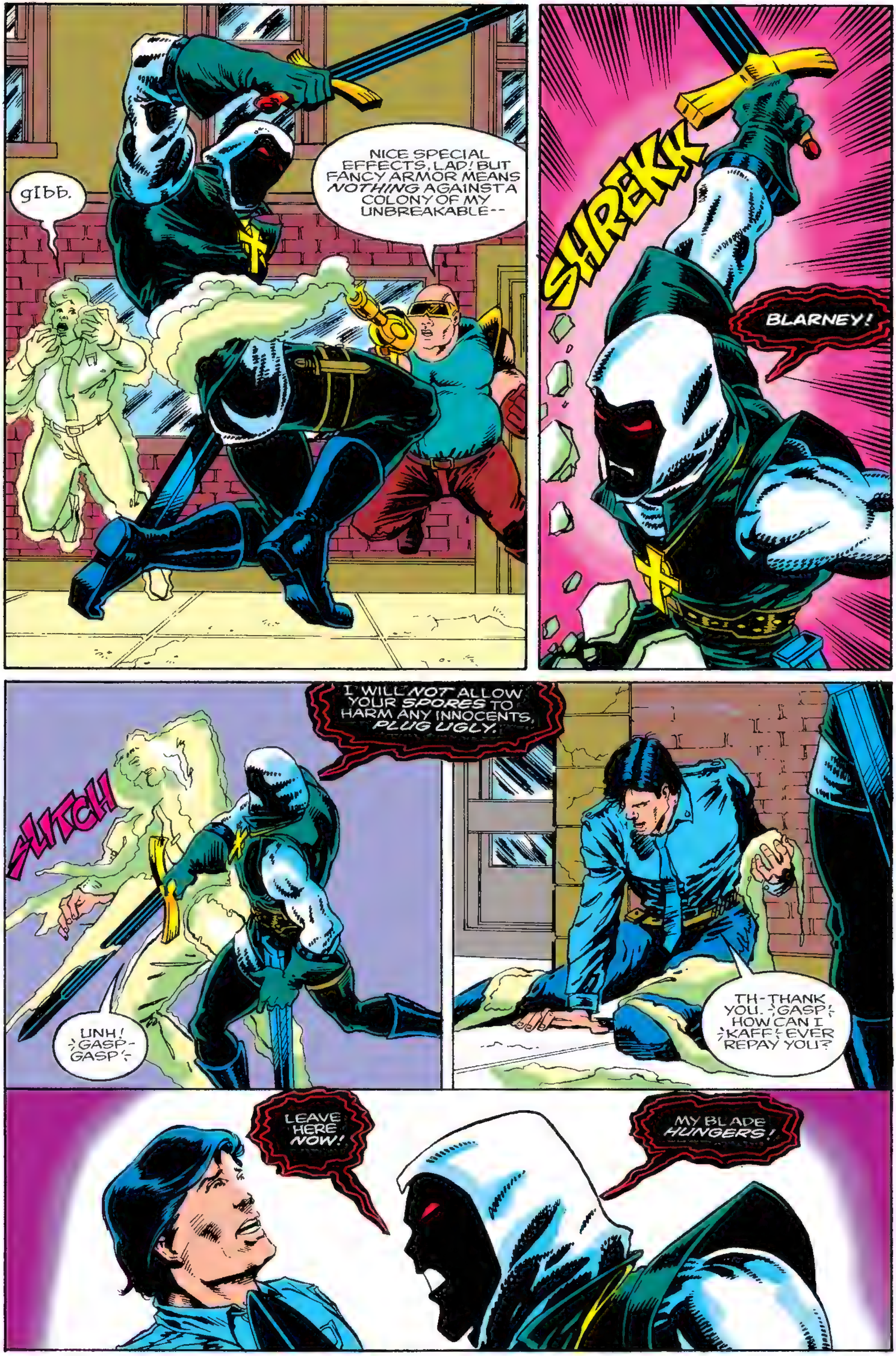

A BANK ON THE CORNER OF 13TH AND F STREETS NW IN DOWNTOWN, WASHINGTON, D.C...
STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE BLOODWRAITH, DEADPOOL & THE BLACK KNIGHT IN...
SWORDPLAY³
AWRIGHT, GIRLIE--LISSEN UP! I'M DA FLAME AN' DAT'S MY BRUDDAH, FOAM. WE'RE DA PLUG-UGLIES!!
IF YA DON'T WANNA END UP LIKE DAT SECURITY GUARD OR DIS HERE PLEXI-GLASS WINDOW, THEN YA BETTER COOPERATE!
P-PLEASE, SIR--TAKE ALL THE MONEY... J-JUST DON'T HURT ANYONE.
MY DEAR WOMAN-- WE ARE NOT SEEKING FINANCIAL GAIN FROM THIS VENTURE.
WE SIMPLY REQUIRE THE CONTENTS OF TOLLIVER'S SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX!
PLEASE WAIT FOR NEXT AVAILA TELL
GLENN HERDLING WRITER MIKE GUSTOVICH PENCILER ARIANE LENSHOEK INKS & COLORS JANICE CHIANG LETTERS RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

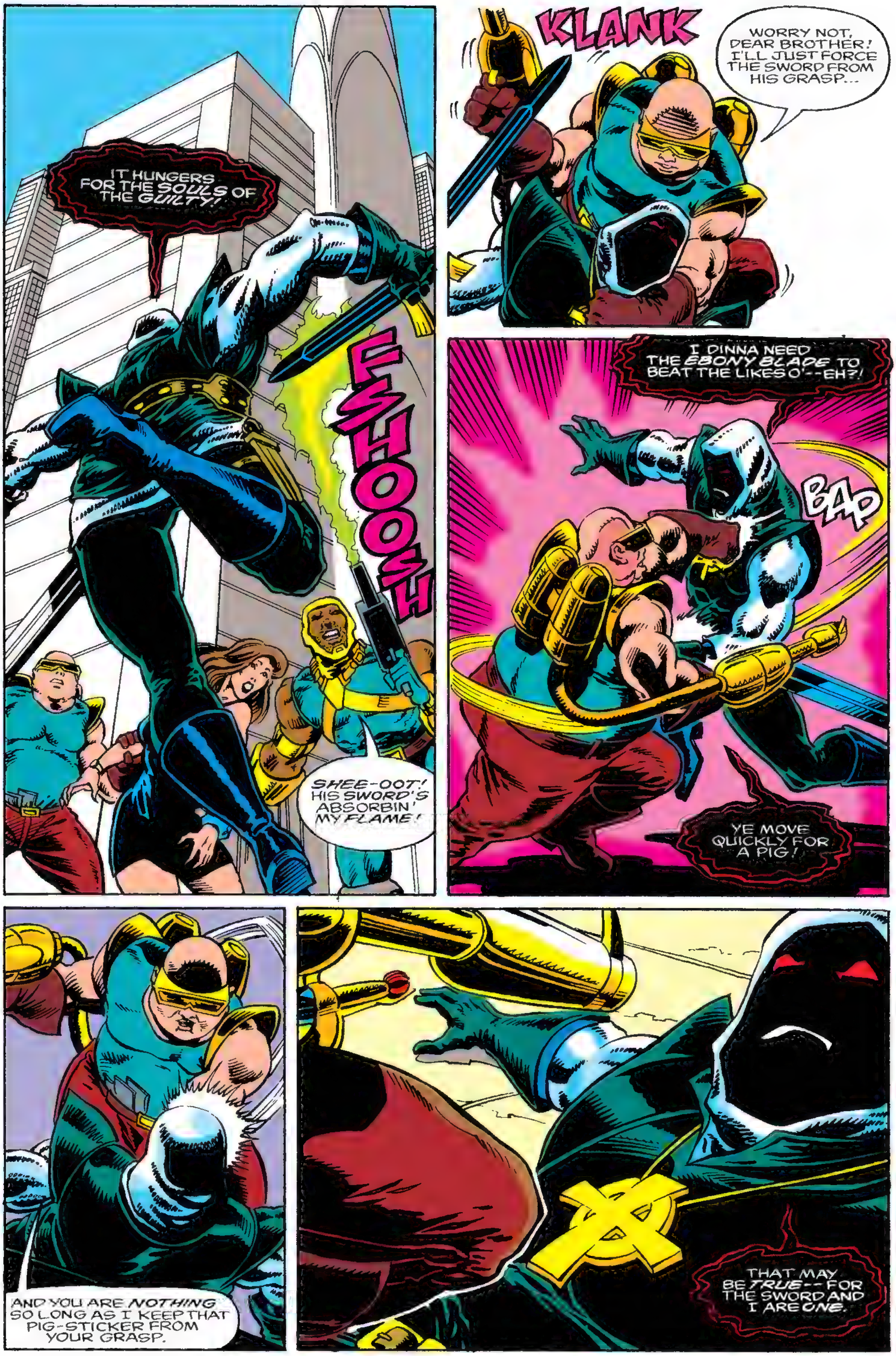

GUARD DA CUSTOMERS, FOAM.
THBBBT
GLADLY, MY BROTHER. WHEN THIS INSANE SCAVENGER HUNT ENDS, WE SHALL POSSESS THE *ULTIMATE WEAPON* AS DICTATED BY *TOLLIVER'S WILL.**
**SEE THE CURRENT DEADPOOL LIMITED SERIES.* --EXECUTOR RALF
FSHOOSH
HOPE IT'S SOMETHIN' BETTER'N THESE DORKY *GUNS* YA COOKED UP, EMIL!
GET IN THERE, GIRLIE! OPEN UP TOLLIVER'S *BOX!*
oh!
C'MON, C'MON, SISTER! WE AIN'T GOT ALL DAY!
I-I NEED T-TO FIND THE RIGHT K-KEY... *THERE!*
GOOD! NOW STEP ASIDE!
THWAP
OHH!
WHA--? HEY, *FOAM!* THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' IN HERE BUT MORE A' THEM *COMPUTER DISKS!*
OF COURSE. THESE DISKS WILL GIVE US THE NEXT CLUE TO... *FLAME--* THE *GIRL!!*
CLICK
YOU SHOULDN'T A' DONE THAT, SISTER. NOW WE'RE GONNA NEED A *HOSTAGE.*

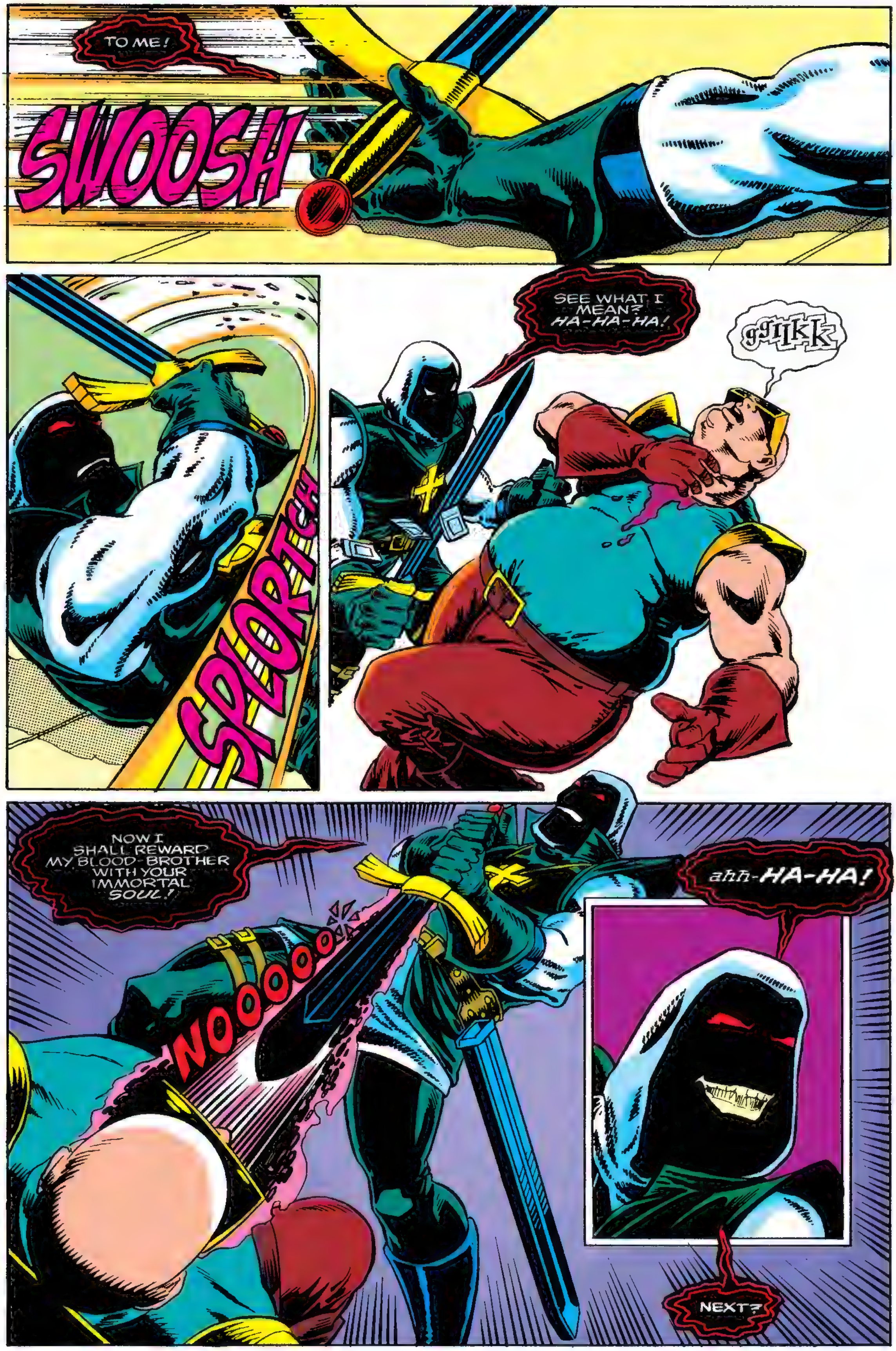

MEANWHILE, A SOMBER FIGURE STROLLS THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE...
AH, SEAN DOLAN LAD, CAN YE BELIEVE YOUR STRING O' BAD LUCK?
LAST THING I REMEMBER IS PULLING THE CURSED BLADE FROM THAT METEOR.* AFTER THAT, IT'S LIKE WATCHING A MOVIE O' MYSELF.
I TURNED INTO SOME DEMON AND BATTLED MY MENTOR, THE BLACK KNIGHT.
*SEE AVENGERS ANNUAL #22.--RALF
I CANNA GO BACK TO HIM AFTER I SHAMED HIM SO...
BEEP BEEP BEEP
...BUT I'M STARVING. I MUST USE THE MONEY ACCESS CARD THE KNIGHT GAVE ME WHEN I FIRST CAME TO AMERICA AS HIS SQUIRE.
OCH! THE AUTHORITIES--THEY'VE FOUND ME!
WHEEEEEOO
NO--THEY'RE LOOKING PAST ME.
AWRIGHT, BLUE-BOYS--WE'RE WALKIN', SEE? IF YA TRY TA STOP US--
--DA GIRL GET'S A FACE FULL A' DIS!
FSHOOSH
EEAAGH!
BENNY!
BENNY, DEAR LORD! HIT THE DIRT! ROLL!!
AAAAA!

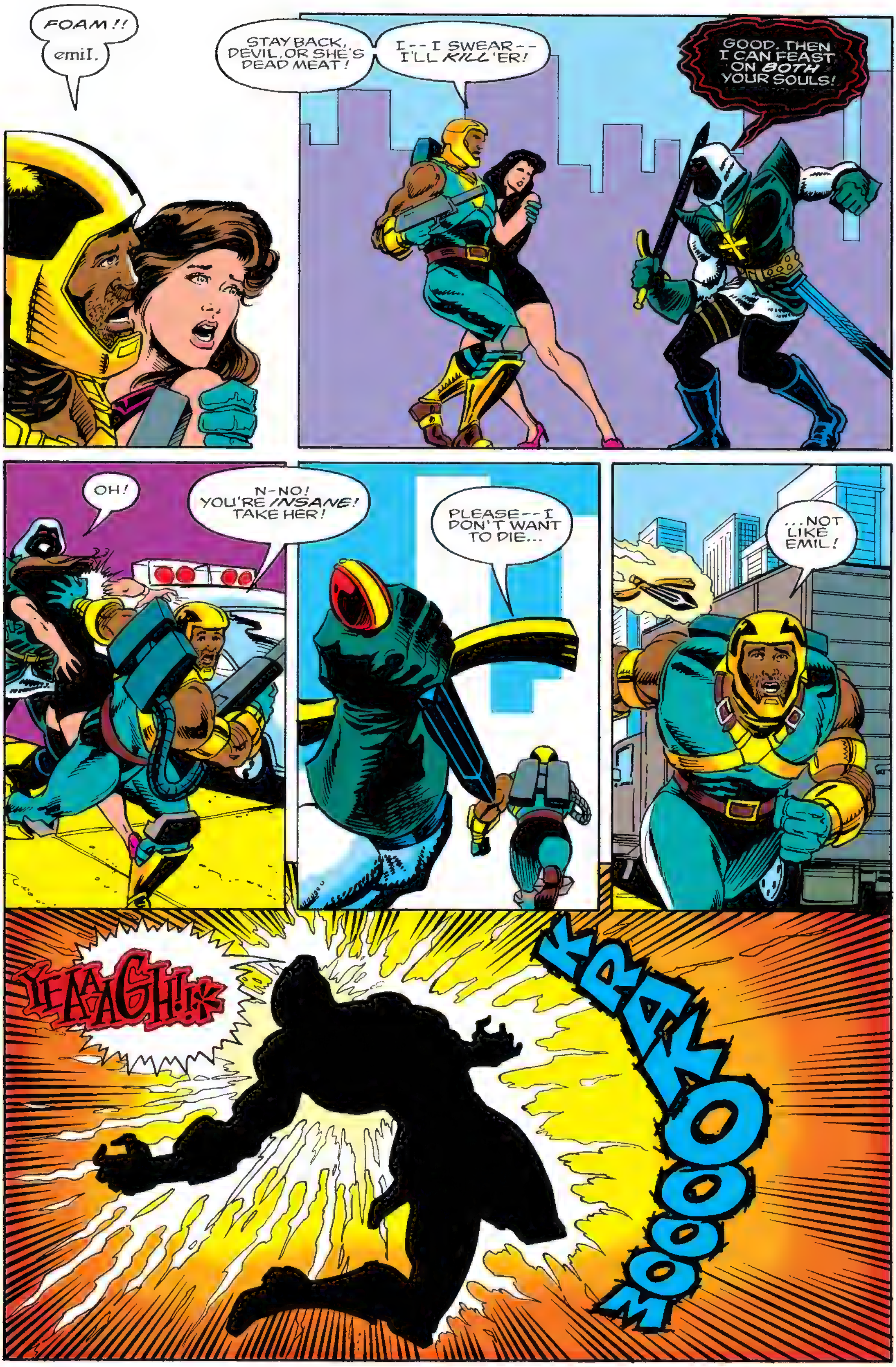

DON'T FRET OVER YOUR PARTNER, FRIEND-- NOT WHEN YOU MUST CONTEND WITH THE OTHER HALF OF THE PLUG UGLIES!
MY FOAM IS MADE FROM ORGANIC POLYMERS THAT MULTIPLY WHEN EXPOSED TO THE AIR, BLANKETING YOU IN A CONSTRICTING SHEET OF UNBREAKABLE LIVING CELLOPHANE.
glIBBb
PLEASE-- H-HELP ME
I-I...
RELEASE THE GIRL, PLUG UGLIES! SO DEMANDS THE SQUIRE O' THE BLACK KNIGHT!
HAW-HAW! YA HEAR DAT, FOAM? IRISH WANTS TA PLAY!
FSHOOSH
HE SHOULD KNOW IT'S NOT SAFE TA PLAY WIT' FIRE!
UNH!
YE FOOLS! YE DINNA KNOW WHAT FORCES YOU'RE DEALING WITH!
YE LEAVE ME NO CHOICE...
OBSERVE, BROTHER-- THE LAD DRAWS A SWORD!
WHATCHA GONNA DO WIT' DAT, IRISH-- CALL UPON DA POWER OF GRAYSKULL?! HAW-HAW!
NO, SOMETHING MUCH MORE FRIGHTENING...

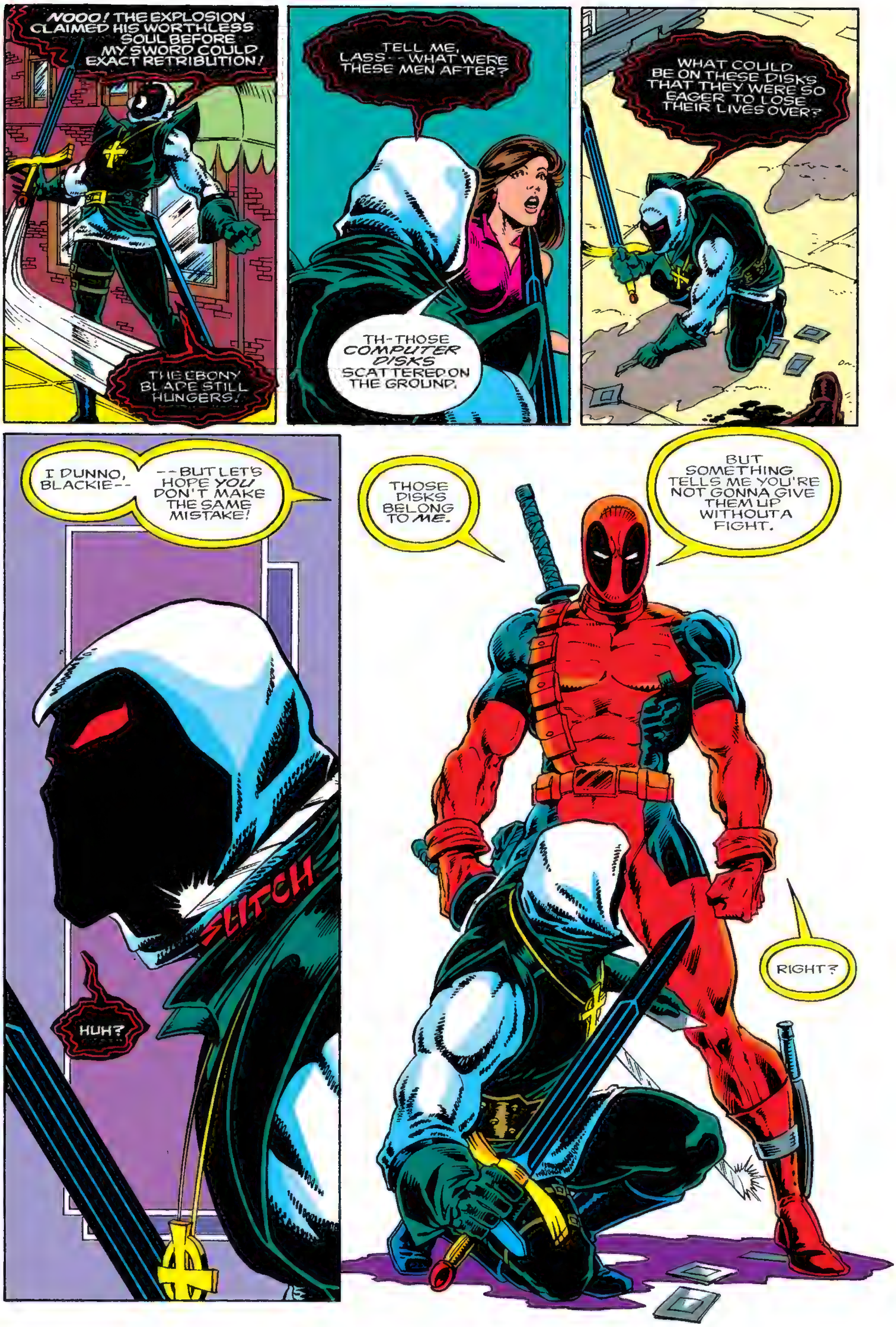

...THE POWER OF THE BLOOD WRAITH!
oh
no

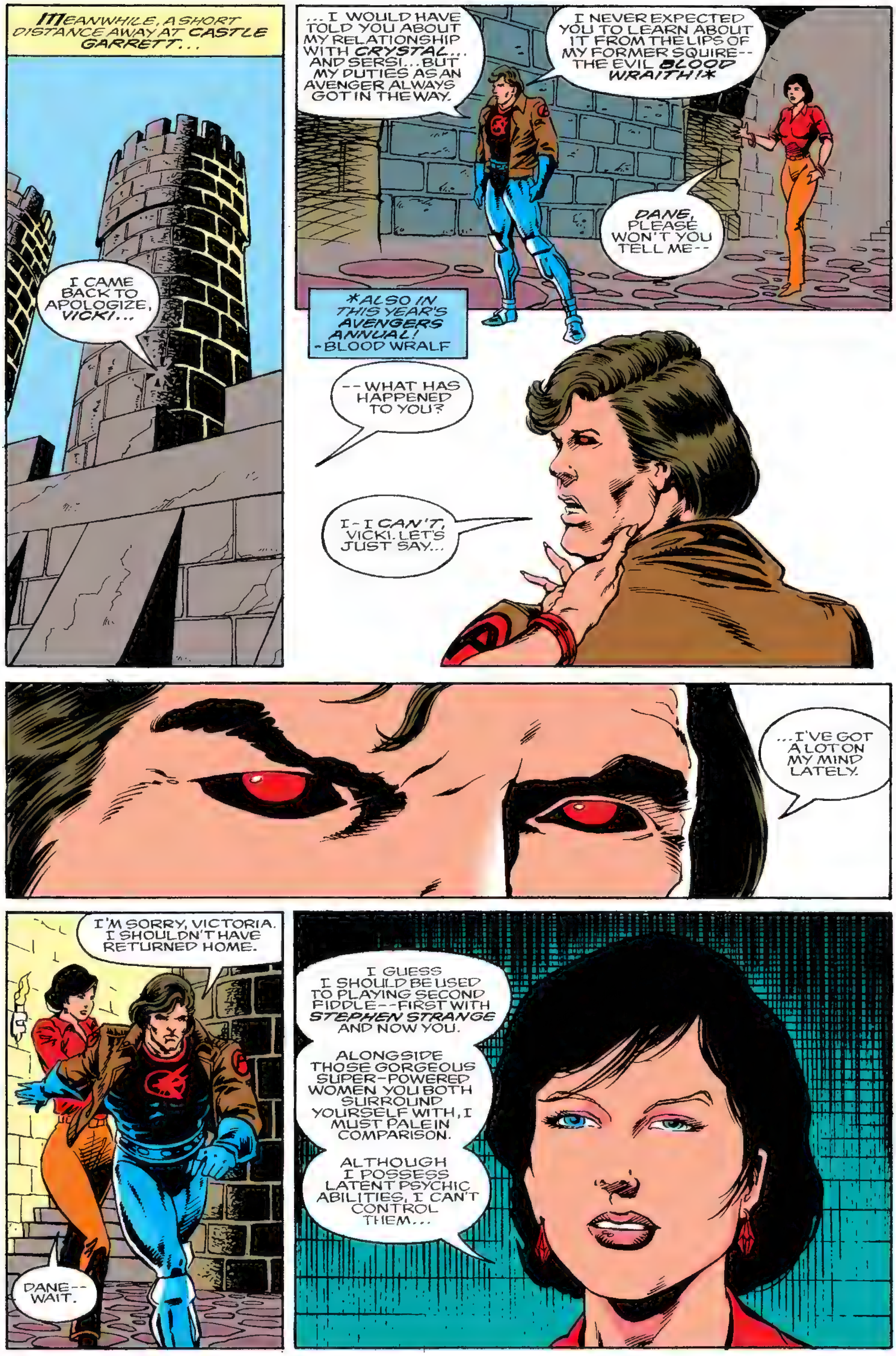

gibb.
NICE SPECIAL EFFECTS, LAD! BUT FANCY ARMOR MEANS *NOTHING* AGAINST A COLONY OF MY UNBREAKABLE--
SHREKK
BLARNEY!
I WILL *NOT* ALLOW YOUR *SPORES* TO HARM ANY INNOCENTS, *PLUG UGLY.*
SLITCH
UNH! -GASP- GASP!-
TH-THANK YOU. -GASP!- HOW CAN I -KAFF!- EVER REPAY YOU?
LEAVE HERE *NOW!*
MY BLADE *HUNGERS!*

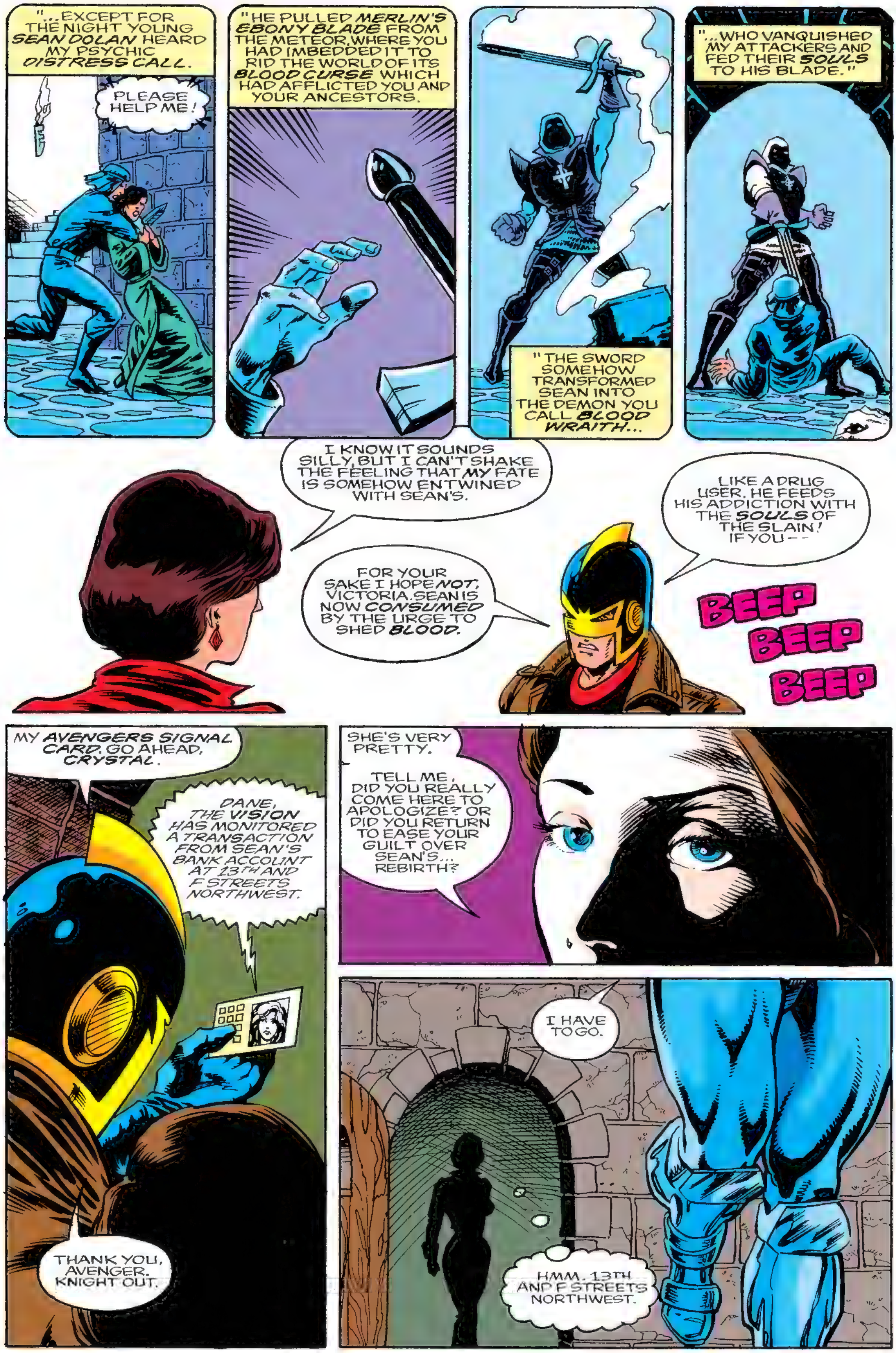

IT HUNGERS FOR THE *SOULS* OF THE *GUILTY!*
FSHOOSH
SHEE-OOT! HIS *SWORD'S* ABSORBIN' MY *FLAME!*
KLANK
WORRY NOT, DEAR BROTHER! I'LL JUST FORCE THE SWORD FROM HIS GRASP...
I DINNA NEED THE *EBONY BLADE* TO BEAT THE LIKES O'--EH?!
BAP
YE MOVE QUICKLY FOR A PIG!
AND YOU ARE *NOTHING* SO LONG AS I KEEP THAT PIG-STICKER FROM YOUR GRASP.
THAT MAY BE *TRUE*--FOR THE SWORD AND I ARE *ONE*.

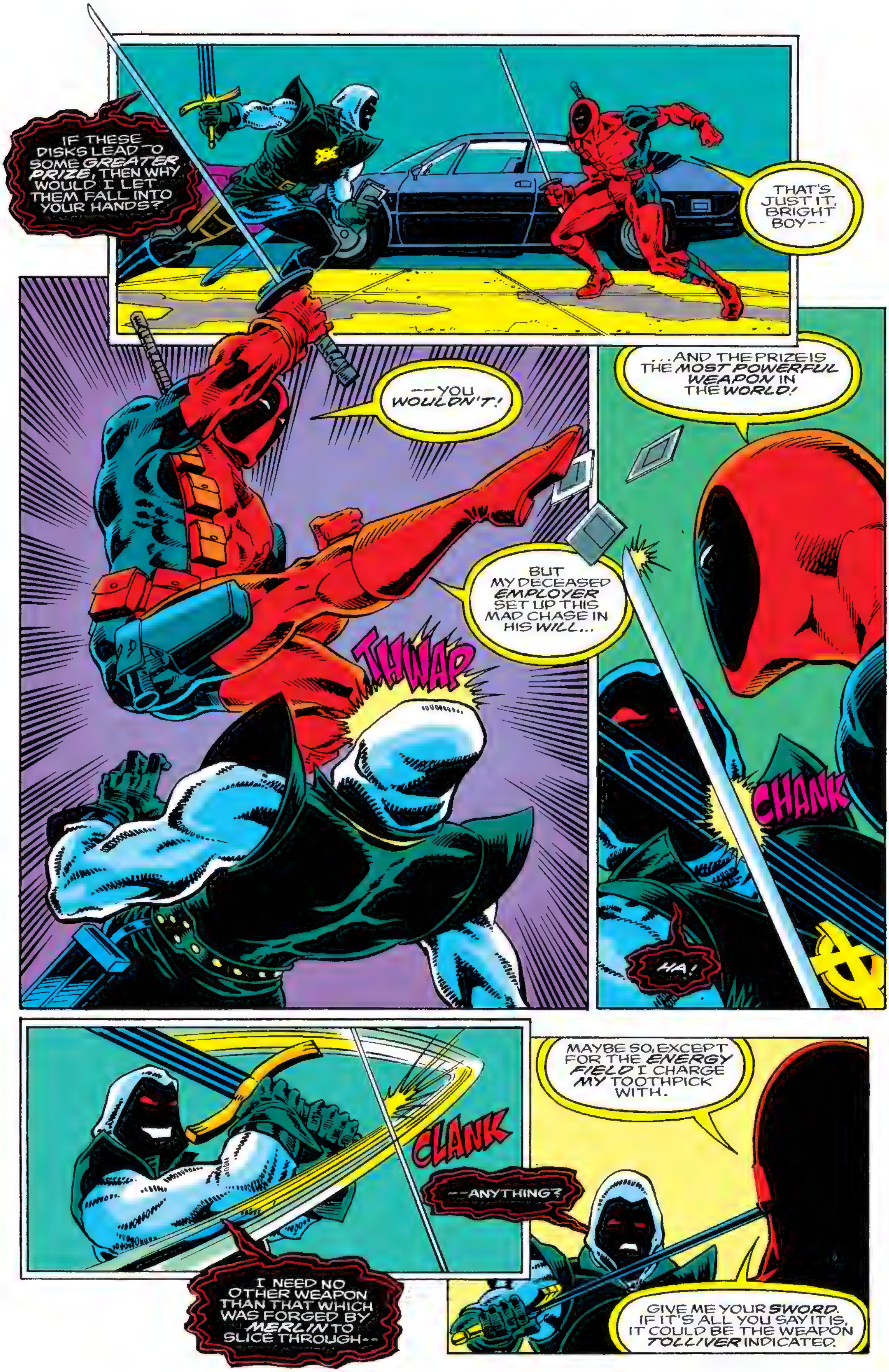

TO ME!
SWOOSH
SPLORTCH
SEE WHAT I MEAN? *HA-HA-HA!*
ggrlkk
NOW I SHALL REWARD MY BLOOD-BROTHER WITH YOUR IMMORTAL *SOUL!*
NOOOOOO
ahh-HA-HA!
NEXT?

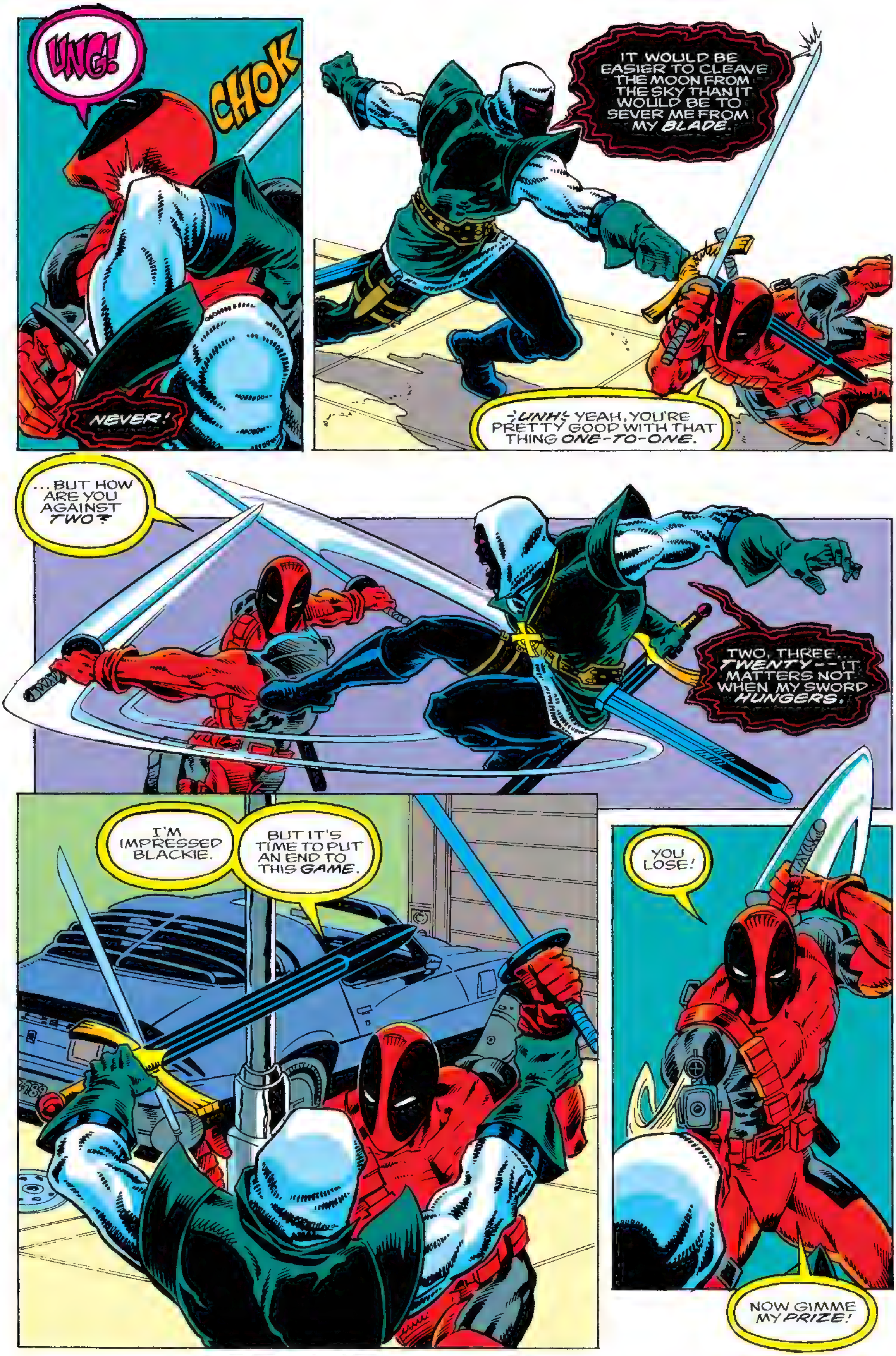

FOAM!! emiI.
STAY BACK, DEVIL, OR SHE'S DEAD MEAT!
I-- I SWEAR-- I'LL *KILL* 'ER!
GOOD. THEN I CAN FEAST ON *BOTH* YOUR SOULS!
OH!
N-NO! YOU'RE *INSANE!* TAKE HER!
PLEASE-- I DON'T WANT TO DIE...
...NOT LIKE EMIL!
YEAAAGH!!*
KRAKOOOOOOM

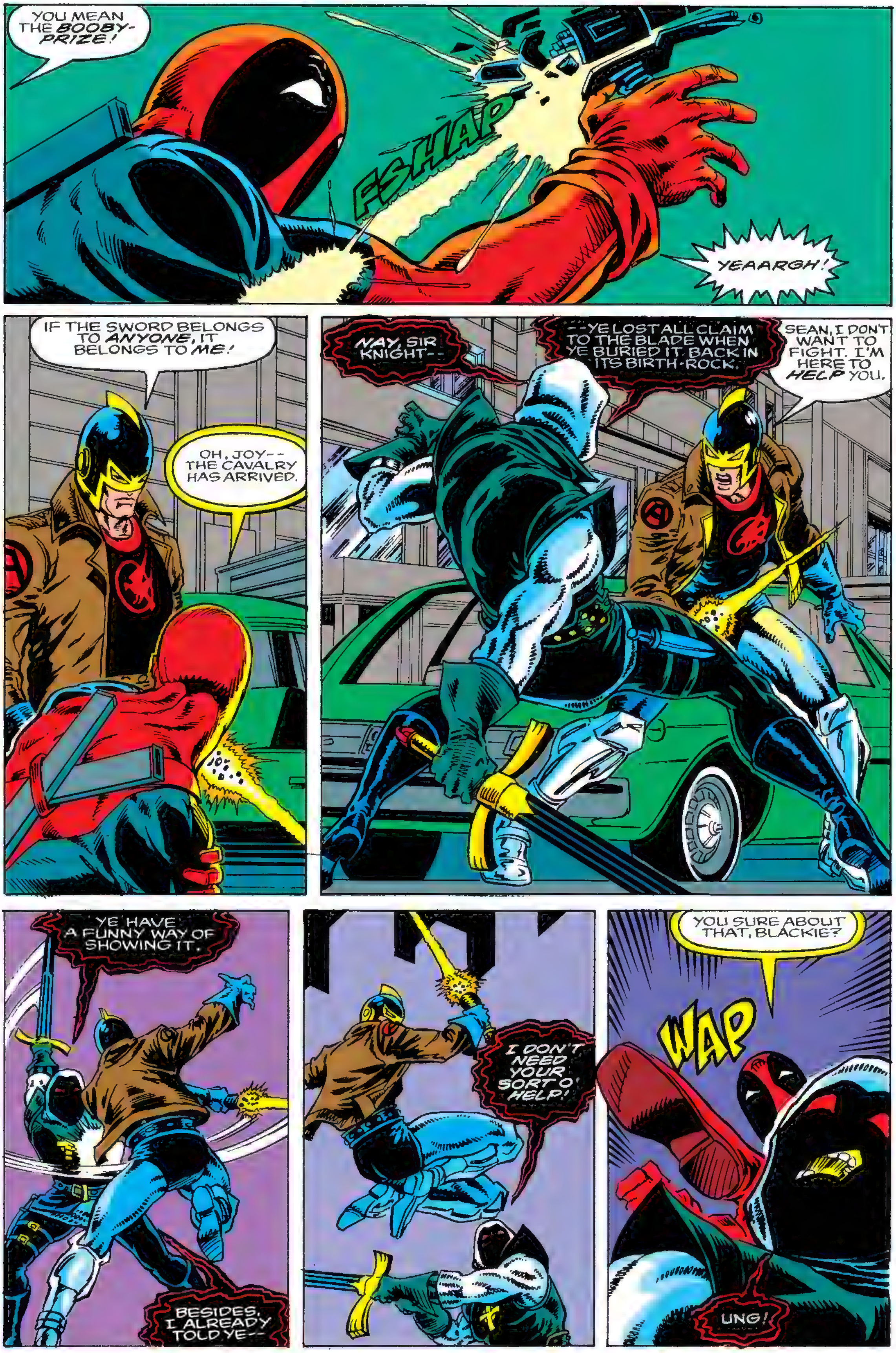

NOOO! THE EXPLOSION CLAIMED HIS WORTHLESS SOUL BEFORE MY SWORD COULD EXACT RETRIBUTION!
THE EBONY BLADE STILL HUNGERS!
TELL ME, LASS-- WHAT WERE THESE MEN AFTER?
TH-THOSE *COMPUTER DISKS* SCATTERED ON THE GROUND.
WHAT COULD BE ON THESE DISKS THAT THEY WERE SO EAGER TO LOSE THEIR LIVES OVER?
I DUNNO, BLACKIE--
--BUT LET'S HOPE *YOU* DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE!
SLITCH
HUH?
THOSE DISKS BELONG TO *ME*.
BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU'RE NOT GONNA GIVE THEM UP WITHOUT A FIGHT.
RIGHT?

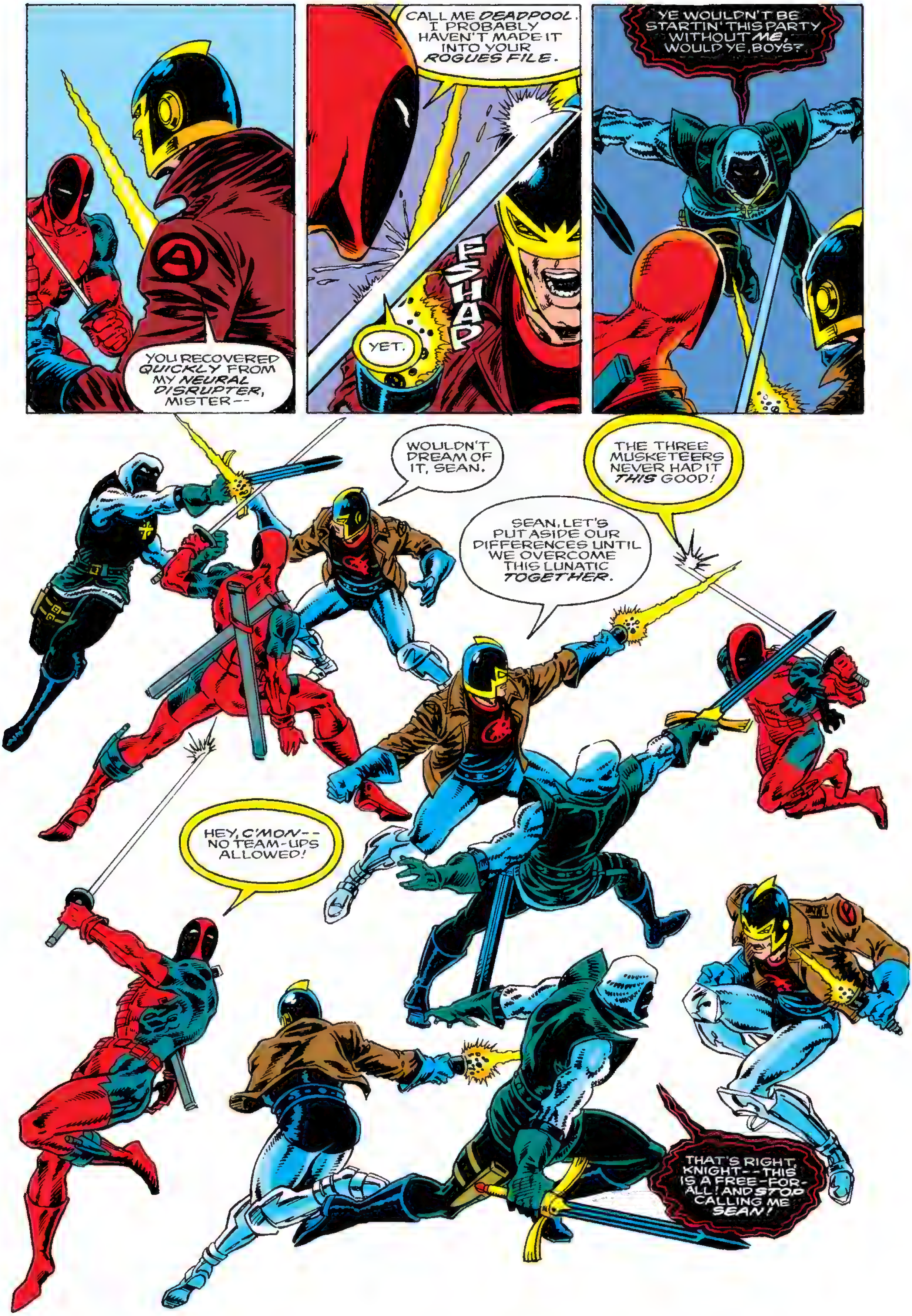

MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY AT CASTLE GARRETT...
I CAME BACK TO APOLOGIZE, VICKI...
...I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH CRYSTAL... AND SERSI... BUT MY DUTIES AS AN AVENGER ALWAYS GOT IN THE WAY.
I NEVER EXPECTED YOU TO LEARN ABOUT IT FROM THE LIPS OF MY FORMER SQUIRE-- THE EVIL BLOOD WRAITH!*
DANE, PLEASE WON'T YOU TELL ME--
*ALSO IN THIS YEAR'S AVENGERS ANNUAL! -BLOOD WRALF
--WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU?
I-I CAN'T, VICKI. LET'S JUST SAY...
...I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY MIND LATELY.
I'M SORRY, VICTORIA. I SHOULDN'T HAVE RETURNED HOME.
DANE-- WAIT.
I GUESS I SHOULD BE USED TO PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE--FIRST WITH STEPHEN STRANGE AND NOW YOU.
ALONGSIDE THOSE GORGEOUS SUPER-POWERED WOMEN YOU BOTH SURROUND YOURSELF WITH, I MUST PALE IN COMPARISON.
ALTHOUGH I POSSESS LATENT PSYCHIC ABILITIES, I CAN'T CONTROL THEM...

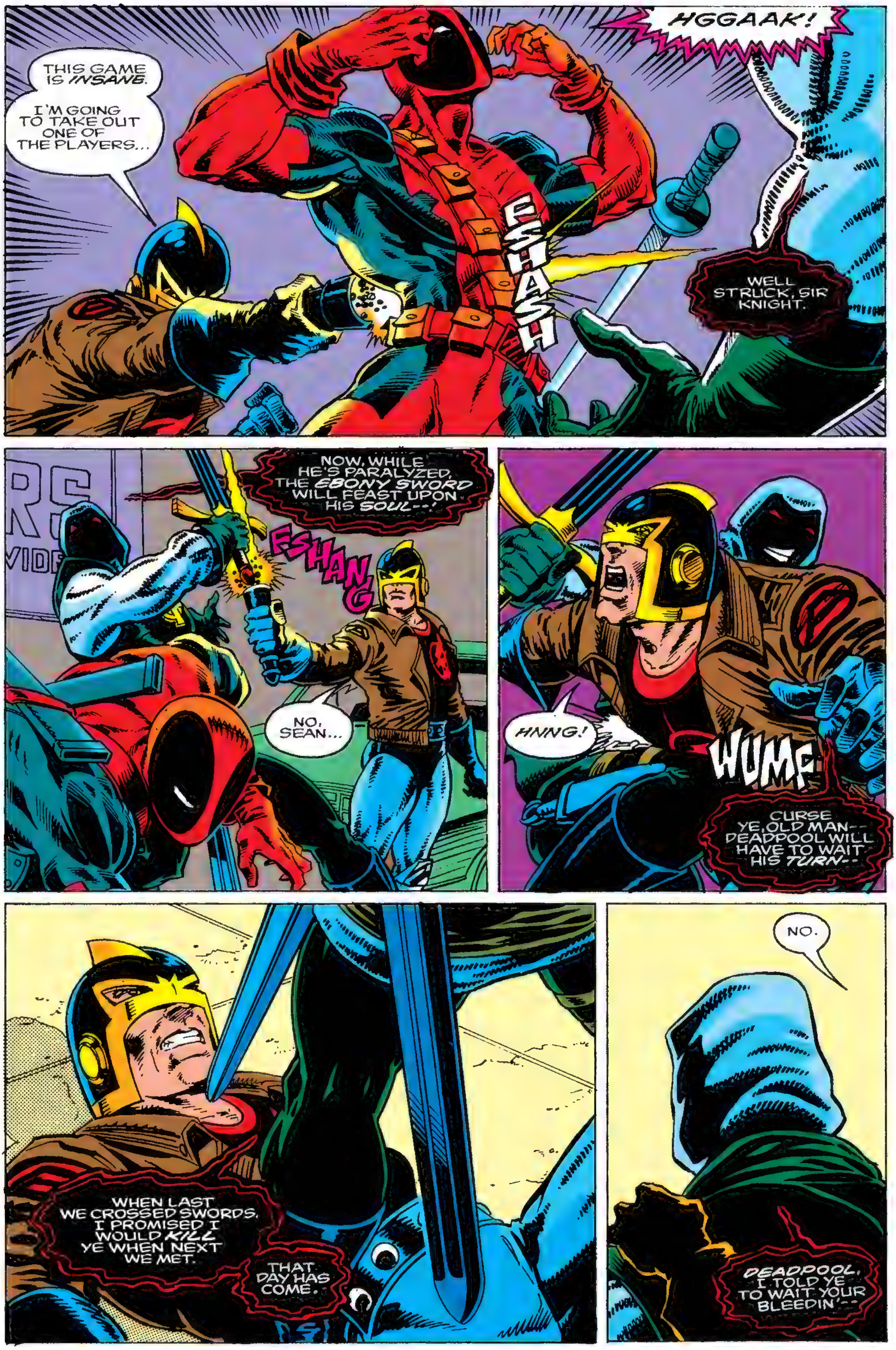

"...EXCEPT FOR THE NIGHT YOUNG **SEAN DOLAN** HEARD MY PSYCHIC **DISTRESS CALL.**
PLEASE HELP ME!
"HE PULLED **MERLIN'S EBONY BLADE** FROM THE METEOR, WHERE YOU HAD IMBEDDED IT TO RID THE WORLD OF ITS **BLOOD CURSE** WHICH HAD AFFLICTED YOU AND YOUR ANCESTORS.
"THE SWORD SOMEHOW TRANSFORMED SEAN INTO THE DEMON YOU CALL **BLOOD WRAITH...**
"...WHO VANQUISHED MY ATTACKERS AND FED THEIR **SOULS** TO HIS BLADE."
I KNOW IT SOUNDS SILLY, BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT **MY** FATE IS SOMEHOW ENTWINED WITH SEAN'S.
LIKE A DRUG USER, HE FEEDS HIS ADDICTION WITH THE **SOULS** OF THE SLAIN! IF YOU--
FOR YOUR SAKE I HOPE **NOT**, VICTORIA. SEAN IS NOW **CONSUMED** BY THE URGE TO SHED **BLOOD.**
BEEP BEEP BEEP
MY **AVENGERS SIGNAL CARD.** GO AHEAD, **CRYSTAL.**
DANE, THE **VISION** HAS MONITORED A TRANSACTION FROM SEAN'S BANK ACCOUNT AT 13TH AND F STREETS NORTHWEST.
THANK YOU, AVENGER. KNIGHT OUT.
SHE'S VERY PRETTY.
TELL ME, DID YOU REALLY COME HERE TO APOLOGIZE? OR DID YOU RETURN TO EASE YOUR GUILT OVER SEAN'S... REBIRTH?
I HAVE TO GO.
HMM. 13TH AND F STREETS NORTHWEST.

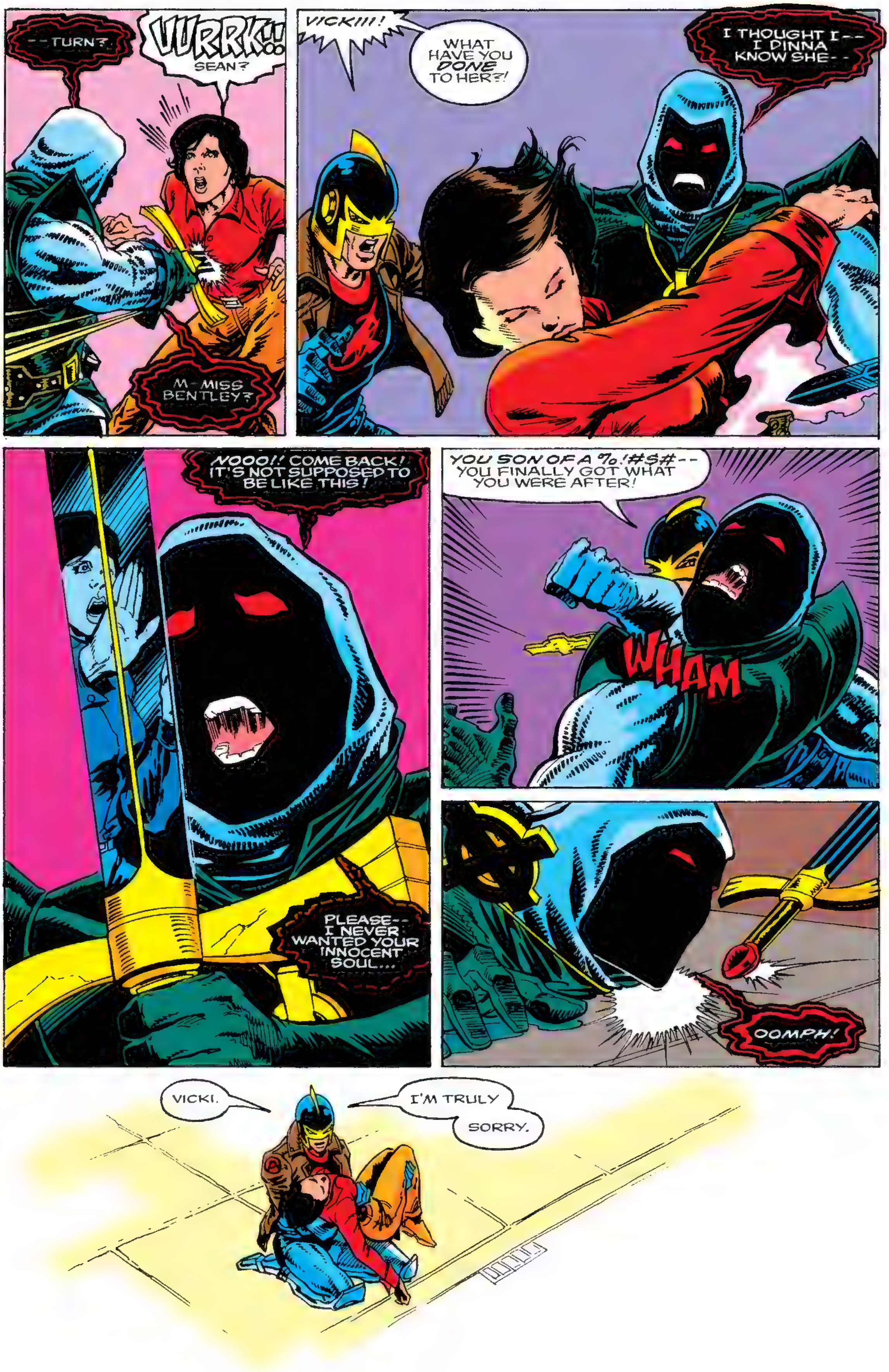

IF THESE DISKS LEAD TO SOME *GREATER PRIZE,* THEN WHY WOULD I LET THEM FALL INTO YOUR HANDS?
THAT'S JUST IT, BRIGHT BOY--
--YOU *WOULDN'T!*
BUT MY DECEASED *EMPLOYER* SET UP THIS MAD CHASE IN HIS *WILL...*
THWAP
...AND THE PRIZE IS THE *MOST POWERFUL WEAPON* IN THE *WORLD!*
CHANK
HA!
I NEED NO OTHER WEAPON THAN THAT WHICH WAS FORGED BY *MERLIN* TO SLICE THROUGH--
CLANK
--ANYTHING?
MAYBE SO, EXCEPT FOR THE *ENERGY FIELD* I CHARGE *MY* TOOTHPICK WITH.
GIVE ME YOUR *SWORD.* IF IT'S ALL YOU SAY IT IS, IT COULD BE THE WEAPON *TOLLIVER* INDICATED.

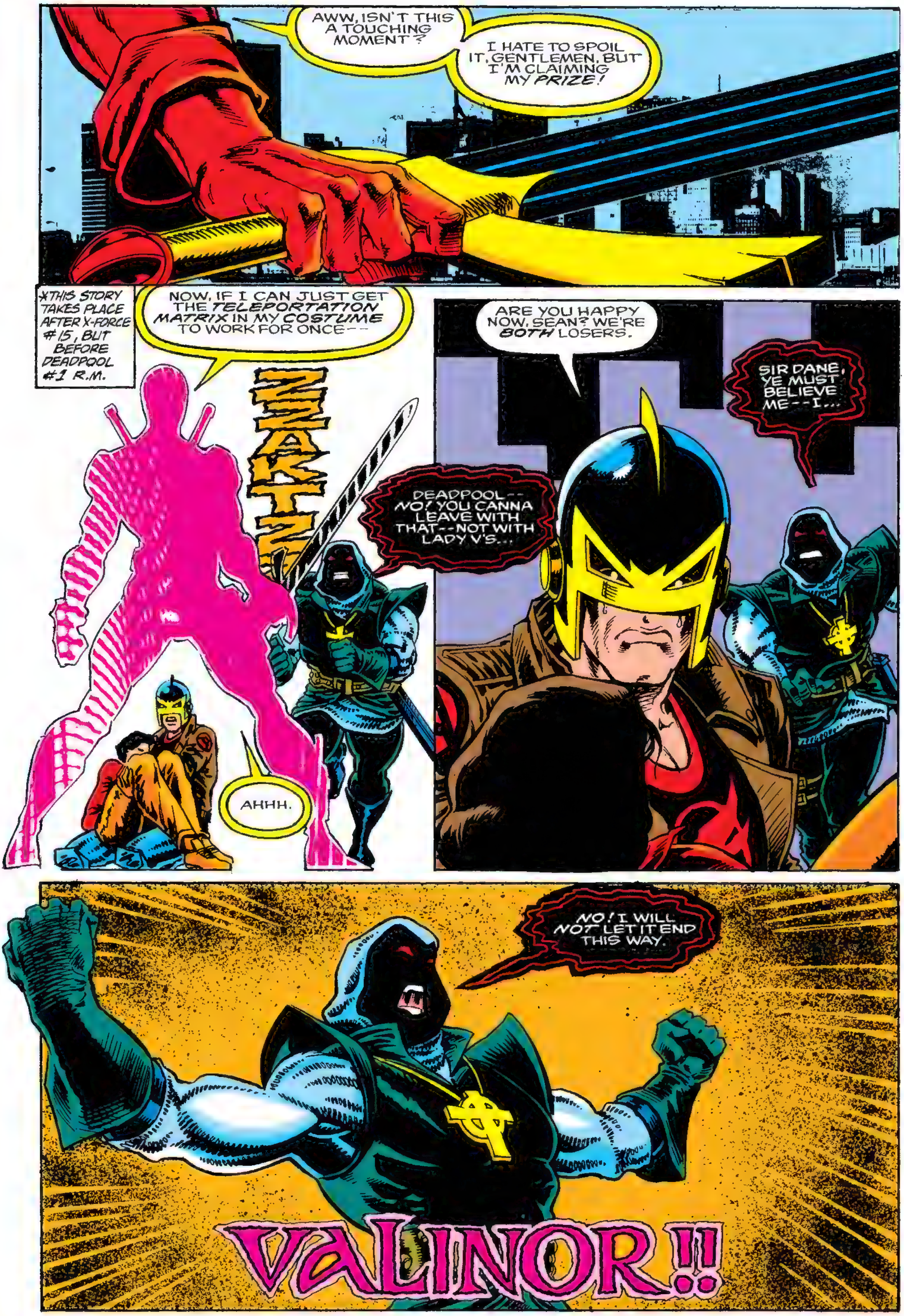

UNG!
CHOK
NEVER!
IT WOULD BE EASIER TO CLEAVE THE MOON FROM THE SKY THAN IT WOULD BE TO SEVER ME FROM MY *BLADE*.
¡*UNH*¡ YEAH, YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD WITH THAT THING *ONE-TO-ONE*.
...BUT HOW ARE YOU AGAINST *TWO*?
TWO, THREE... *TWENTY*--IT MATTERS NOT WHEN MY SWORD *HUNGERS*.
I'M IMPRESSED BLACKIE.
BUT IT'S TIME TO PUT AN END TO THIS *GAME*.
YOU LOSE!
NOW GIMME MY *PRIZE*!

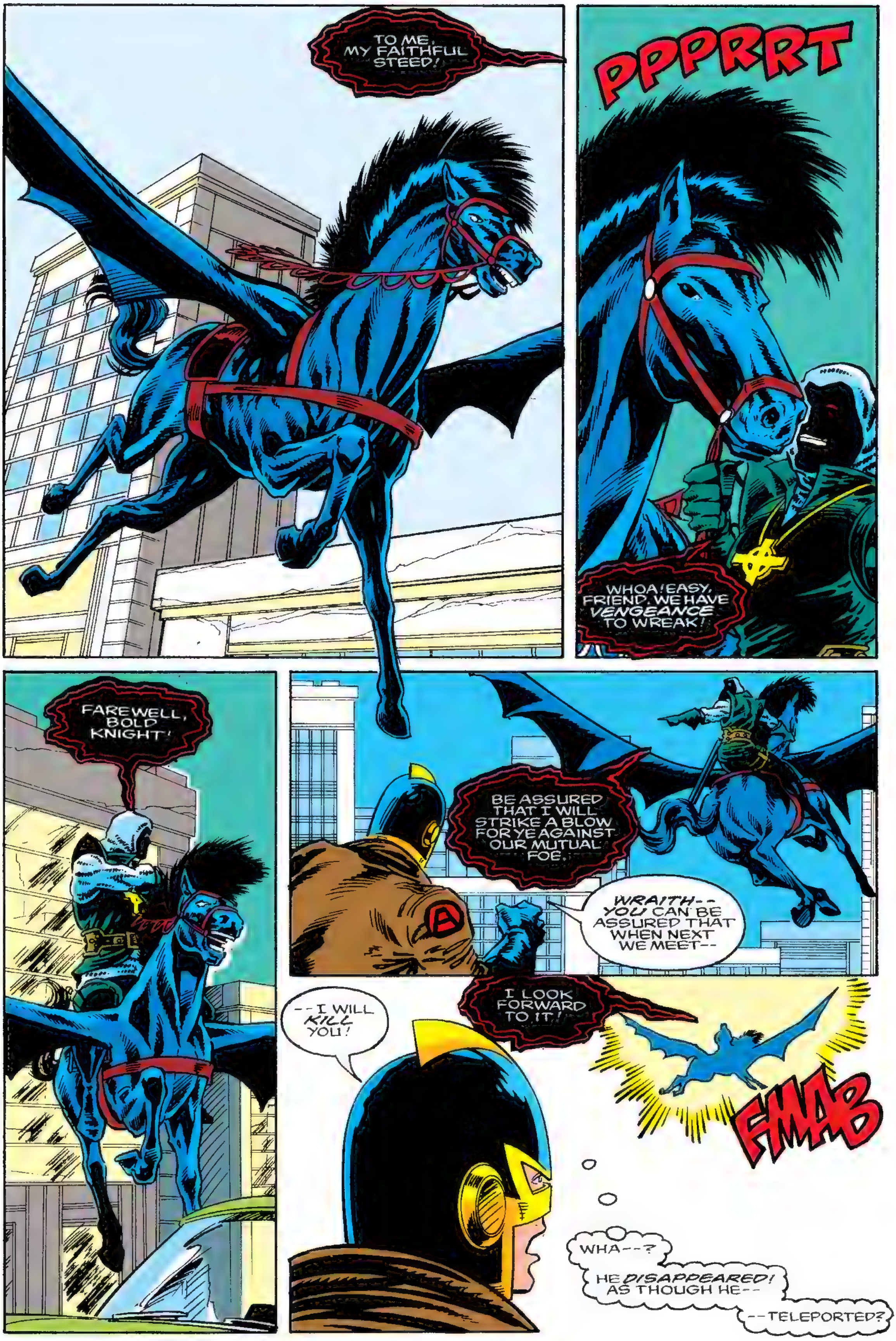

YOU MEAN THE *BOOBY-PRIZE!*
FSHIAP
YEAARGH!
IF THE SWORD BELONGS TO *ANYONE,* IT BELONGS TO *ME!*
OH, JOY-- THE CAVALRY HAS ARRIVED.
NAY, SIR KNIGHT--
--YE LOST ALL CLAIM TO THE BLADE WHEN YE BURIED IT BACK IN ITS BIRTH-ROCK.
SEAN, I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT. I'M HERE TO *HELP* YOU.
YE HAVE A FUNNY WAY OF SHOWING IT.
BESIDES, I ALREADY TOLD YE--
I DON'T NEED YOUR SORT O' HELP!
YOU SURE ABOUT THAT, BLACKIE?
WAP
UNG!

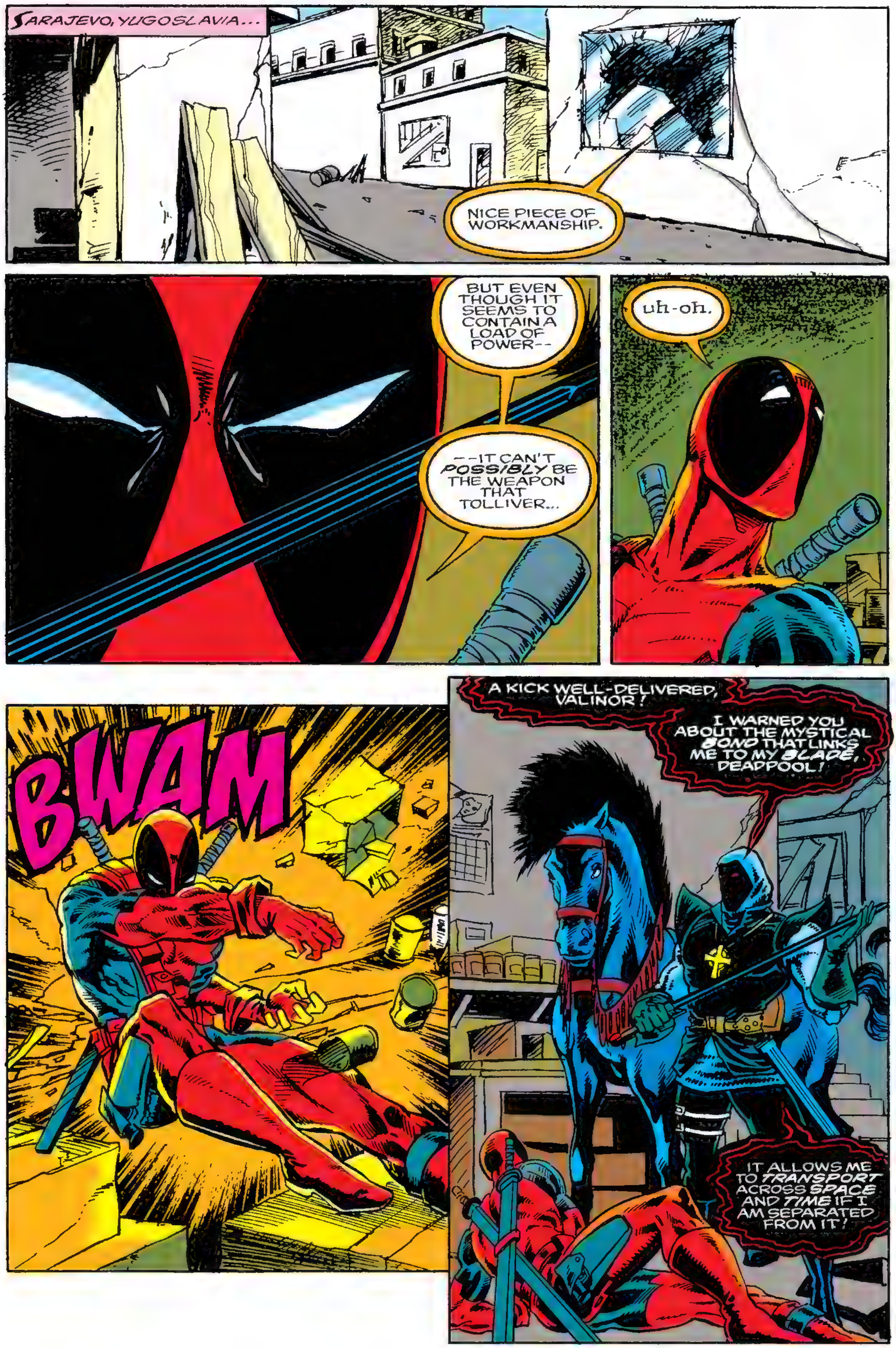

YOU RECOVERED *QUICKLY* FROM MY *NEURAL DISRUPTER*, MISTER--
CALL ME *DEADPOOL*. I PROBABLY HAVEN'T MADE IT INTO YOUR *ROGUES FILE*.
YET.
FSHAP
YE WOULDN'T BE STARTIN' THIS PARTY WITHOUT *ME*, WOULD YE, BOYS?
WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT, SEAN.
THE THREE MUSKETEERS NEVER HAD IT *THIS* GOOD!
SEAN, LET'S PUT ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES UNTIL WE OVERCOME THIS LUNATIC *TOGETHER*.
HEY, *C'MON*-- NO TEAM-UPS ALLOWED!
THAT'S RIGHT, KNIGHT--THIS IS A FREE-FOR-ALL! AND *STOP* CALLING ME *SEAN*!

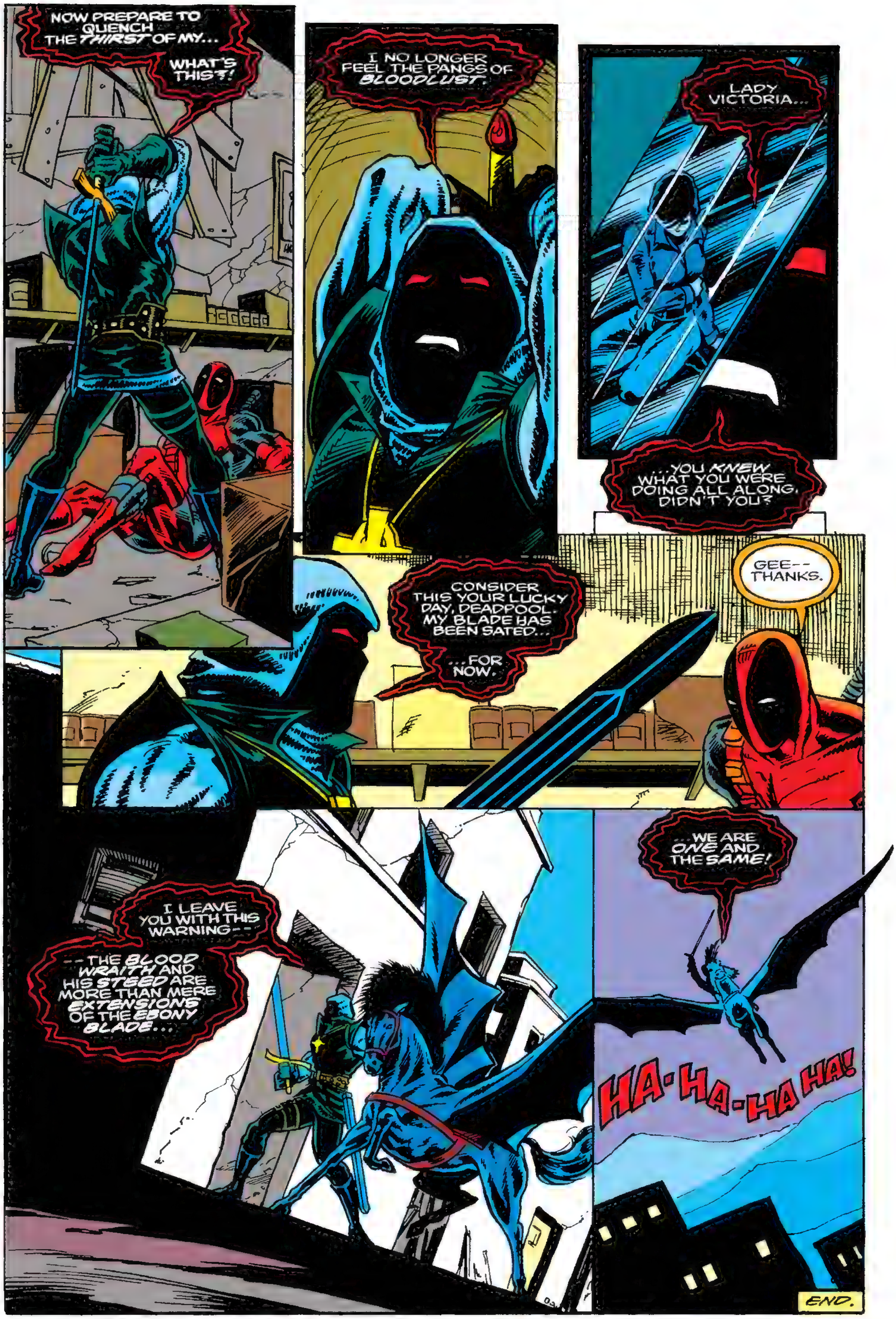

THIS GAME IS *INSANE*.
I'M GOING TO TAKE OUT ONE OF THE PLAYERS...
HGGAAK!
FSHASH
WELL STRUCK, SIR KNIGHT.
NOW, WHILE HE'S PARALYZED, THE *EBONY SWORD* WILL FEAST UPON HIS *SOUL*--!
FSHANG
NO, SEAN...
HNNG!
WUMP
CURSE YE, OLD MAN-- DEADPOOL WILL HAVE TO WAIT HIS *TURN*--
WHEN LAST WE CROSSED SWORDS, I PROMISED I WOULD *KILL* YE WHEN NEXT WE MET.
THAT DAY HAS COME.
NO.
DEADPOOL, I TOLD YE TO WAIT YOUR BLEEDIN'--


--TURN?
UURRK!!
SEAN?
M-MISS BENTLEY?
VICKI!!!
WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* TO HER?!
I THOUGHT I-- I DINNA KNOW SHE--
NOOO!! COME BACK! IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS!
PLEASE-- I NEVER WANTED YOUR INNOCENT SOUL...
YOU SON OF A %!#$#-- YOU FINALLY GOT WHAT YOU WERE AFTER!
WHAM
OOMPH!
VICKI.
I'M TRULY
SORRY.


AWW, ISN'T THIS A TOUCHING MOMENT?
I HATE TO SPOIL IT, GENTLEMEN, BUT I'M CLAIMING MY *PRIZE*!
*THIS STORY TAKES PLACE AFTER X-FORCE #15, BUT BEFORE DEADPOOL #1 R.M.
NOW, IF I CAN JUST GET THE *TELEPORTATION MATRIX* IN MY *COSTUME* TO WORK FOR ONCE--
ZZAKTZ
DEADPOOL-- *NO!* YOU CANNA LEAVE WITH THAT--NOT WITH LADY V'S...
AHHH.
ARE YOU HAPPY NOW, SEAN? WE'RE *BOTH* LOSERS.
SIR DANE, YE MUST BELIEVE ME--I...
NO! I WILL *NOT* LET IT END THIS WAY.
VALINOR!!


TO ME, MY FAITHFUL STEED!
PPPRRRT
WHOA! EASY, FRIEND. WE HAVE *VENGEANCE* TO WREAK!
FAREWELL, BOLD KNIGHT!
BE ASSURED THAT I WILL STRIKE A BLOW FOR YE AGAINST OUR MUTUAL FOE.
WRAITH-- YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT WHEN NEXT WE MEET--
--I WILL *KILL* YOU!
I LOOK FORWARD TO IT!
FMAB
WHA--?
HE *DISAPPEARED!* AS THOUGH HE--
--TELEPORTED?


SARAJEVO, YUGOSLAVIA...
NICE PIECE OF WORKMANSHIP.
BUT EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMS TO CONTAIN A LOAD OF POWER--
--IT CAN'T *POSSIBLY* BE THE WEAPON THAT TOLLIVER...
uh-oh.
BWAM
A KICK WELL-DELIVERED, VALINOR!
I WARNED YOU ABOUT THE MYSTICAL *BOND* THAT LINKS ME TO MY *BLADE*, DEADPOOL!
IT ALLOWS ME TO *TRANSPORT* ACROSS *SPACE* AND *TIME* IF I AM SEPARATED FROM IT!


NOW PREPARE TO QUENCH THE *THIRST* OF MY...
WHAT'S THIS?!
I NO LONGER FEEL THE PANGS OF *BLOODLUST.*
LADY VICTORIA...
...YOU *KNEW* WHAT YOU WERE DOING ALL ALONG, DIDN'T YOU?
CONSIDER THIS YOUR LUCKY DAY, DEADPOOL. MY BLADE HAS BEEN SATED...
...FOR NOW.
GEE--THANKS.
I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS WARNING--
--THE *BLOOD WRAITH* AND HIS *STEED* ARE MORE THAN MERE *EXTENSIONS* OF THE *EBONY BLADE...*
...WE ARE *ONE* AND THE *SAME!*
HA-HA-HA-HA HA!
END.

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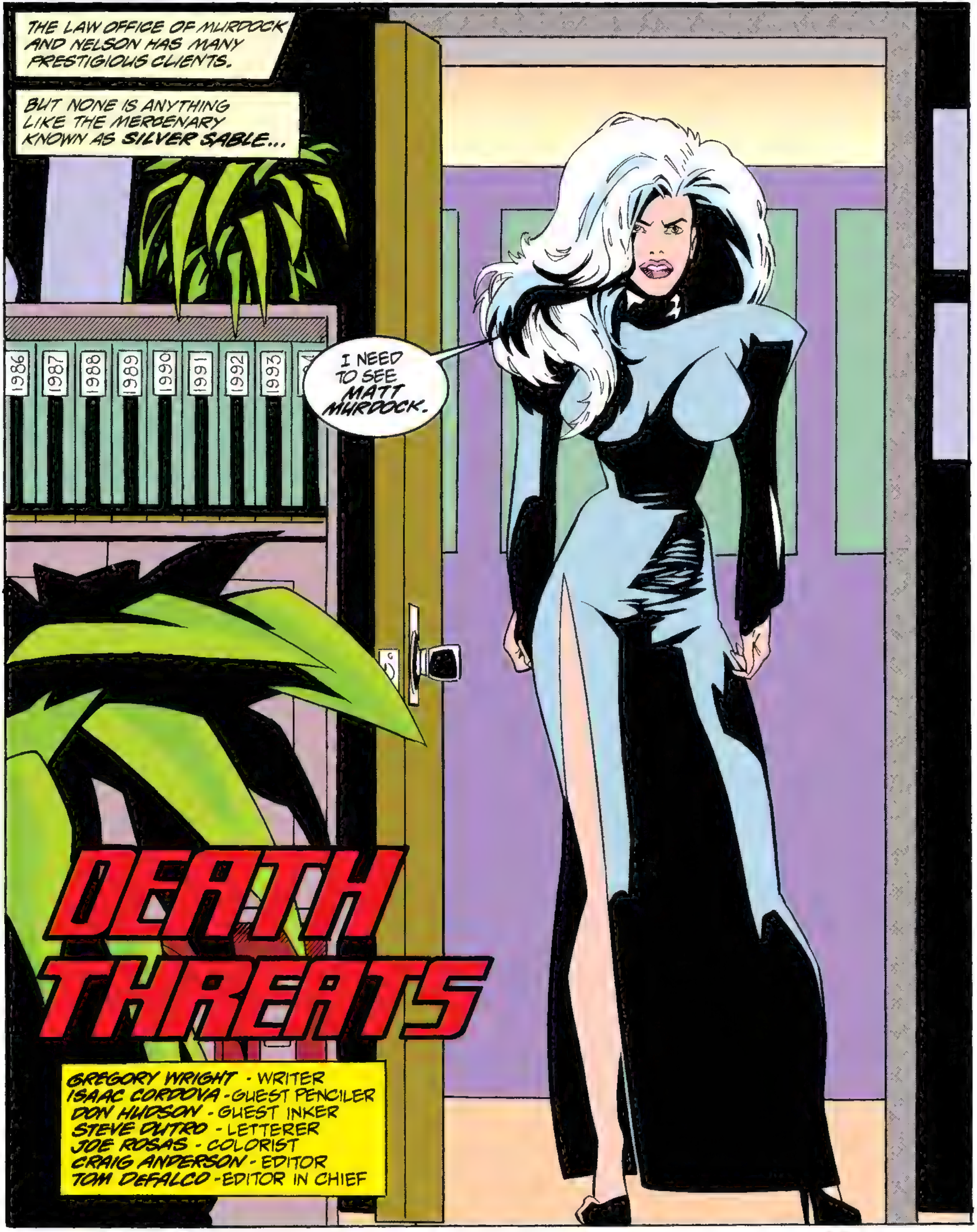
SILVER SABLE
& THE WILD PACK
DAREDEVIL
STEVEN -93-

RELENTLESSLY TRAINED IN MULTIPLE FORMS OF HAND-TO-HAND AND ARMED COMBAT, SILVER SABLE WAS DESTINED TO INHERIT THE COMMAND OF HER FATHER'S PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER UNIT, THE WILDPACK. UNDER THE AUSPICES OF SILVER SABLE INTERNATIONAL, SHE HAS SINCE TRANSFORMED THEM INTO THE ULTIMATE MERCENARY COMBAT FORCE, NOW THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF HER BELOVED HOMELAND, SYMKARIA.


THE LAW OFFICE OF MURDOCK AND NELSON HAS MANY PRESTIGIOUS CLIENTS.
BUT NONE IS ANYTHING LIKE THE MERCENARY KNOWN AS SILVER SABLE...
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
I NEED TO SEE MATT MURDOCK.

DEATH THREATS

GREGORY WRIGHT - WRITER
ISAAC CORDOVA - GUEST PENCILER
DON HUDSON - GUEST INKER
STEVE DUTRO - LETTERER
JOE ROSAS - COLORIST
CRAIG ANDERSON - EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO - EDITOR IN CHIEF

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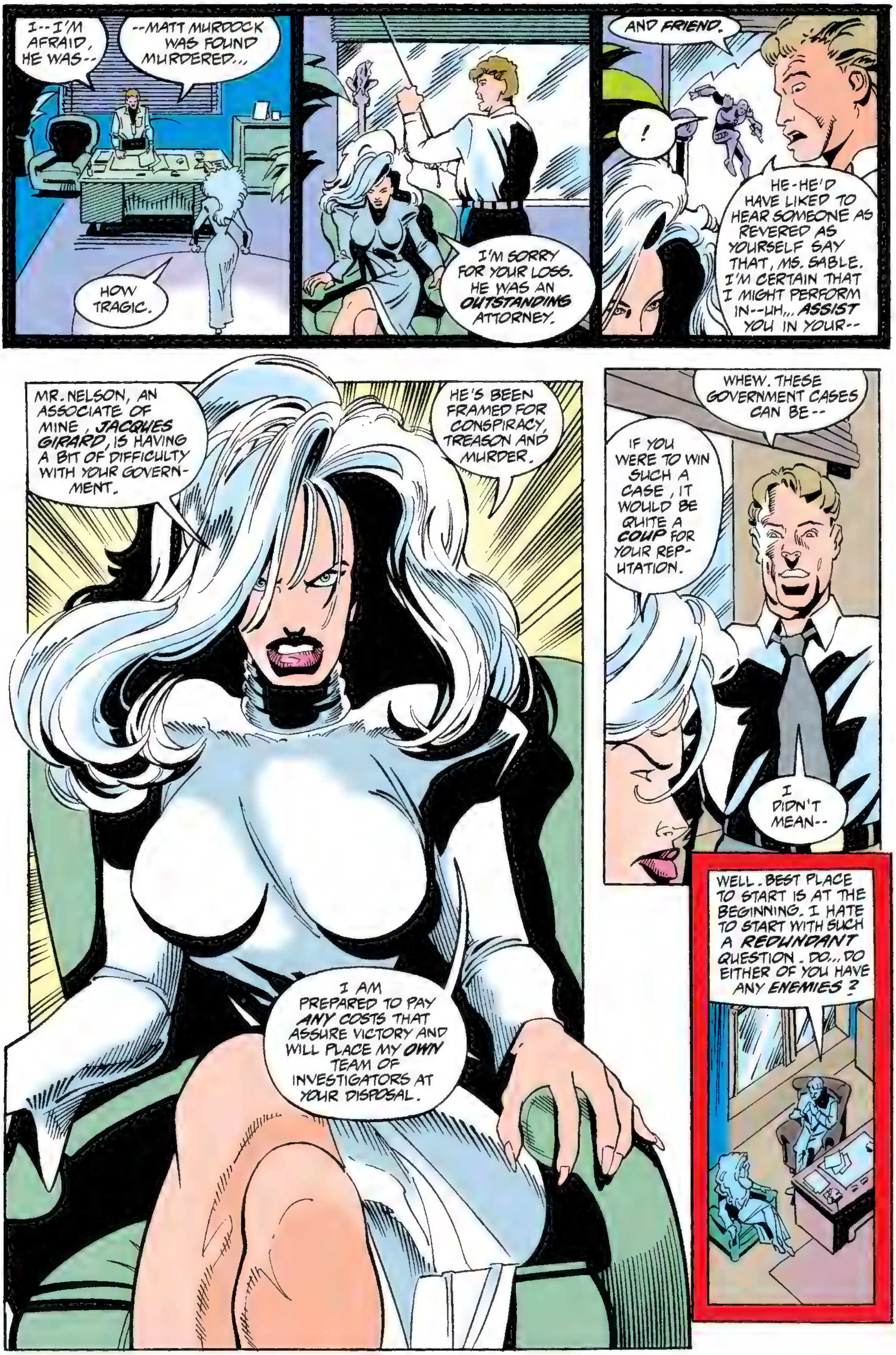
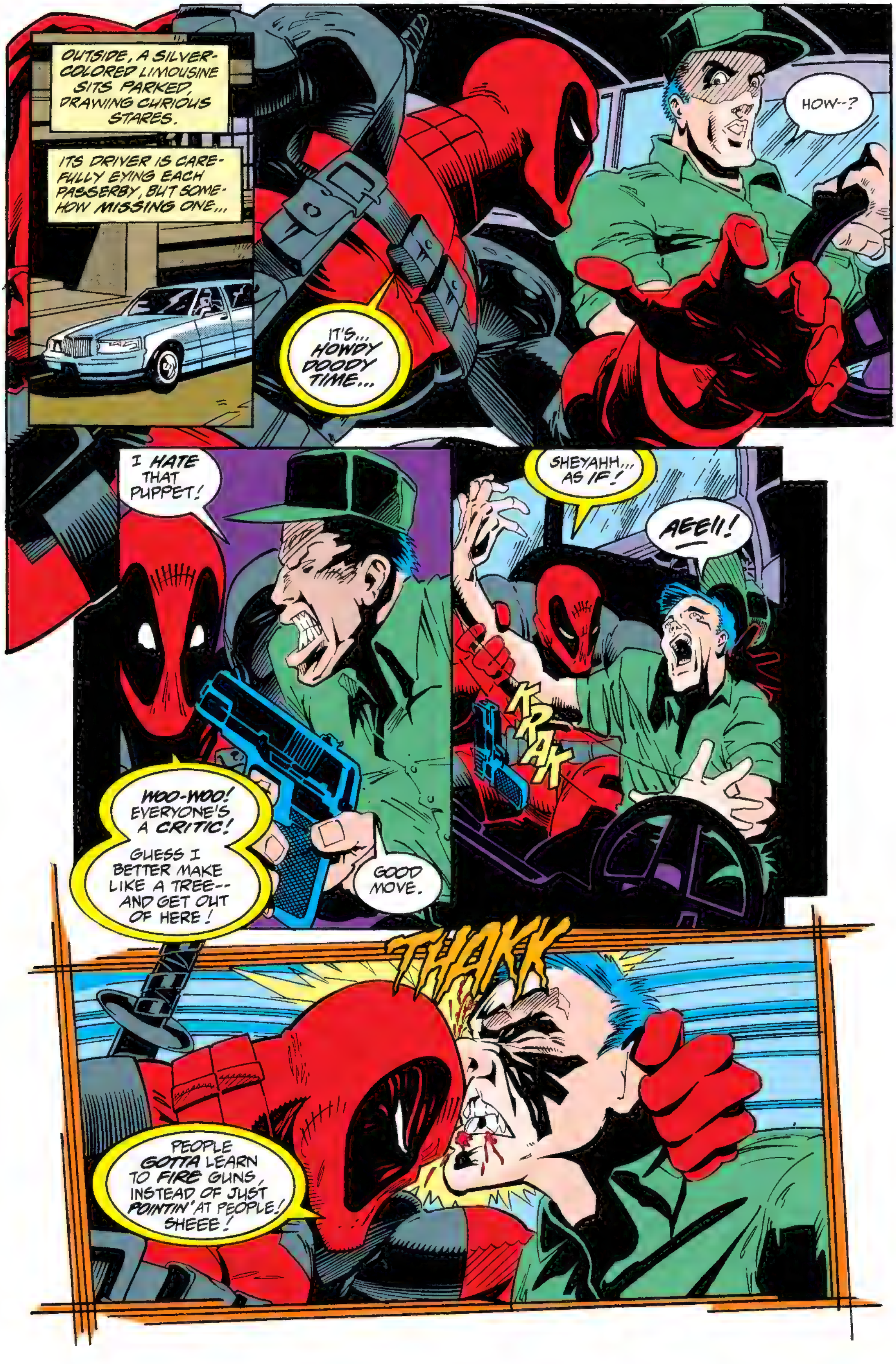
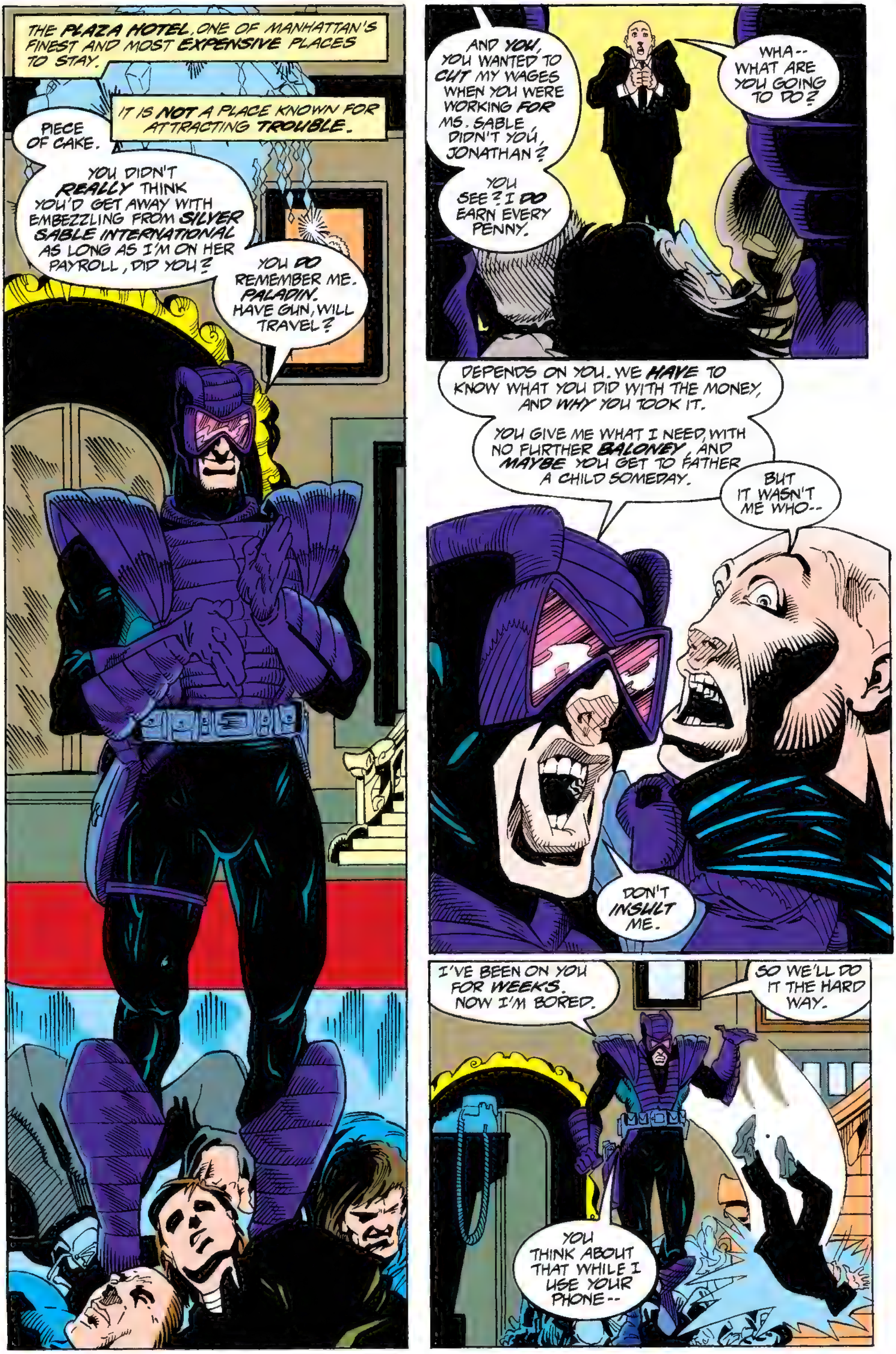
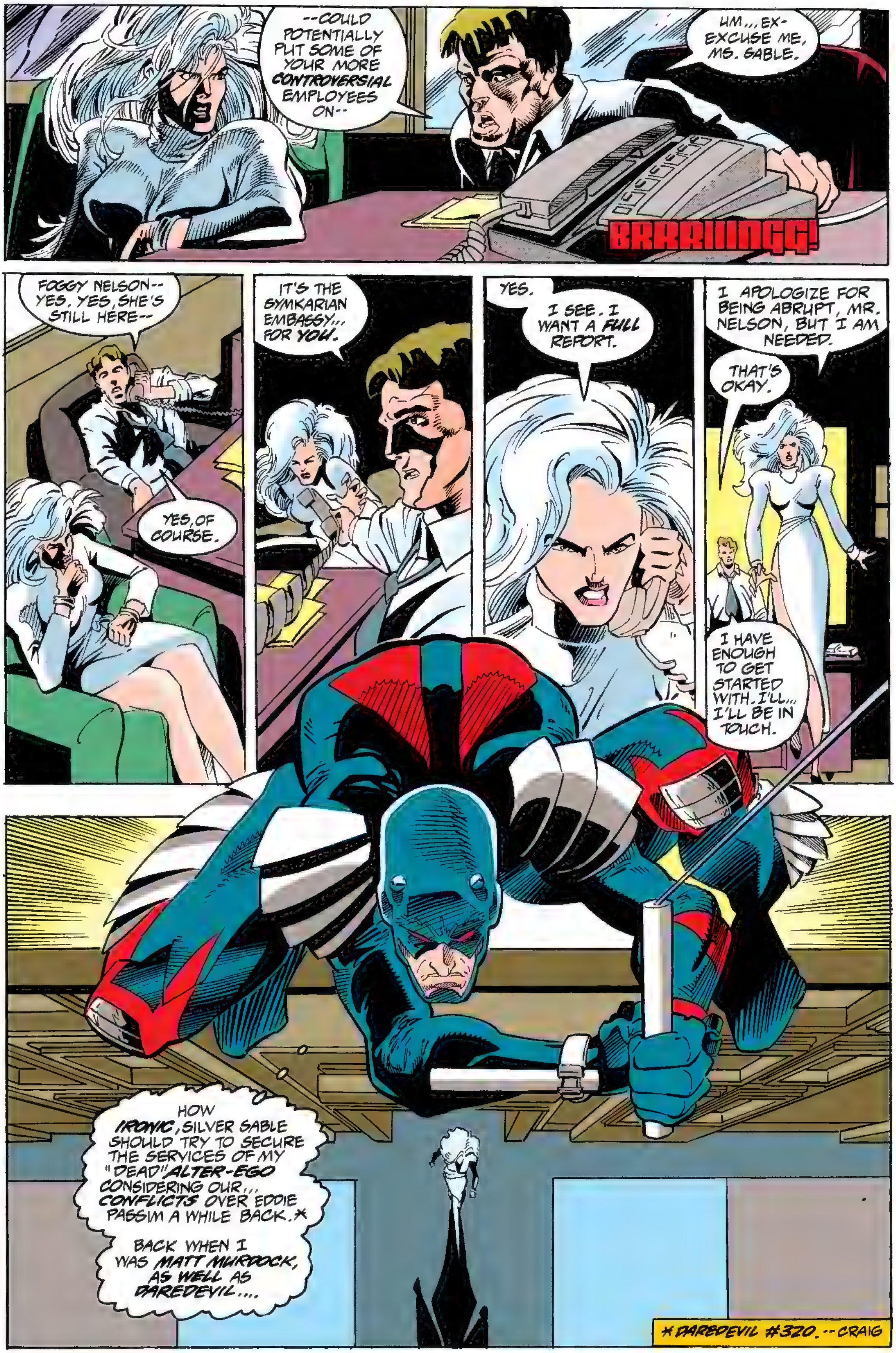
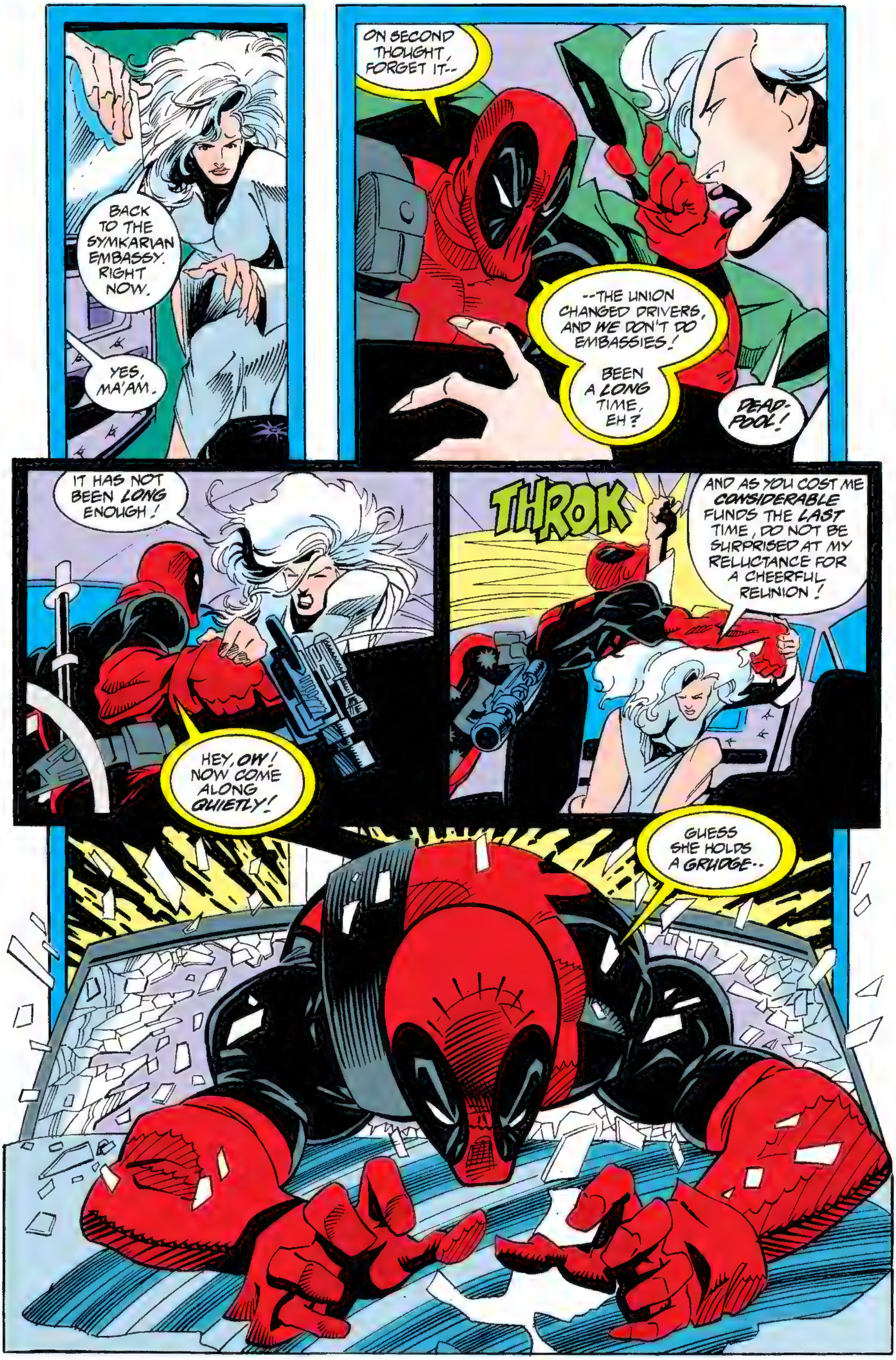
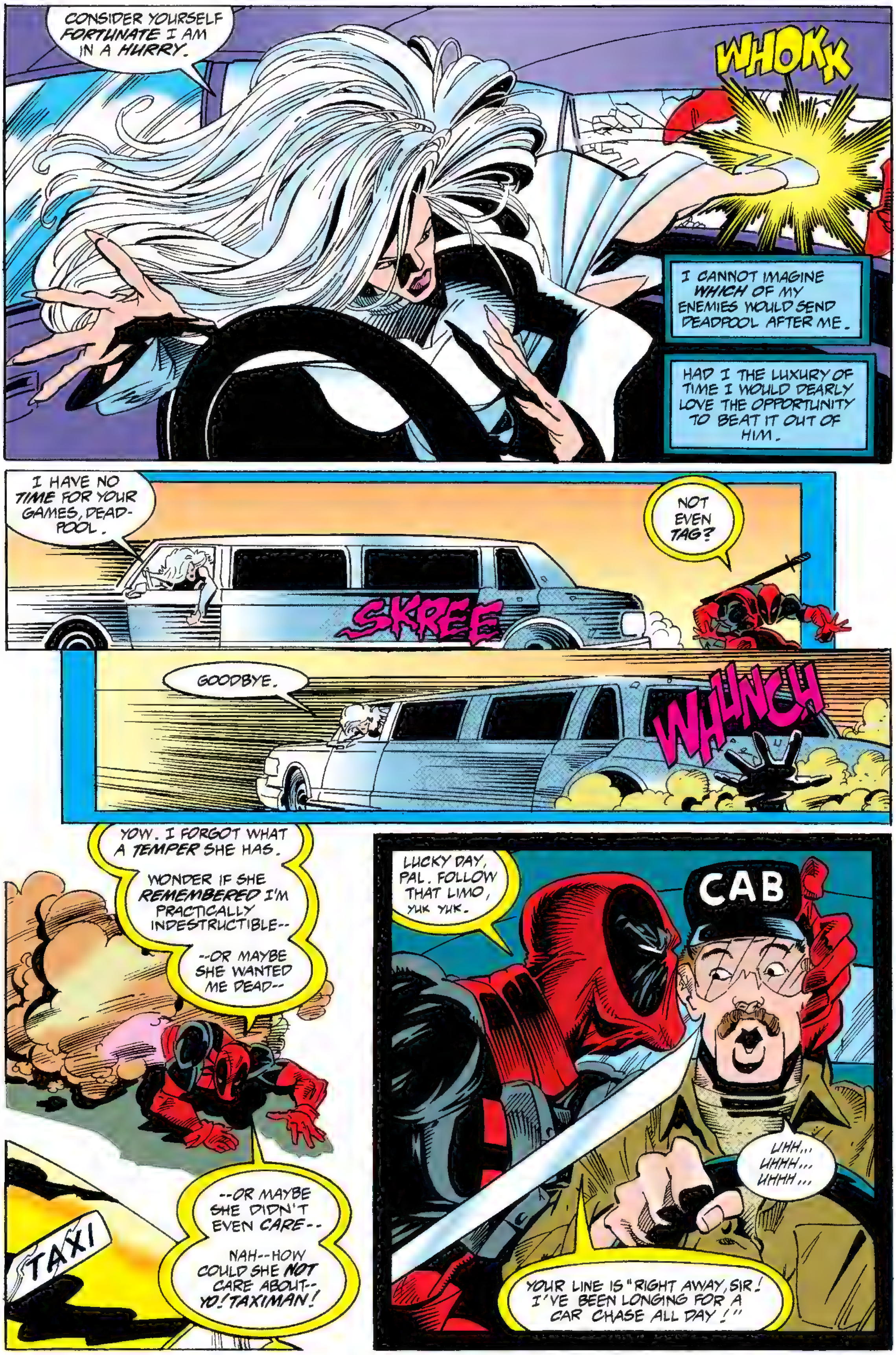

I--I'M AFRAID, HE WAS--
--MATT MURDOCK WAS FOUND MURDERED...
HOW TRAGIC.
I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. HE WAS AN **OUTSTANDING** ATTORNEY.
AND **FRIEND.**
!
HE-HE'D HAVE LIKED TO HEAR SOMEONE AS REVERED AS YOURSELF SAY THAT, MS. SABLE. I'M CERTAIN THAT I MIGHT PERFORM IN--UH... **ASSIST** YOU IN YOUR--
MR. NELSON, AN ASSOCIATE OF MINE, **JACQUES GIRARD**, IS HAVING A BIT OF DIFFICULTY WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT.
HE'S BEEN FRAMED FOR CONSPIRACY, TREASON AND MURDER.
I AM PREPARED TO PAY **ANY COSTS** THAT ASSURE VICTORY AND WILL PLACE MY **OWN** TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS AT YOUR DISPOSAL.
WHEW. THESE GOVERNMENT CASES CAN BE--
IF YOU WERE TO WIN SUCH A CASE, IT WOULD BE QUITE A **COUP** FOR YOUR REPUTATION.
I DIDN'T MEAN--
WELL. BEST PLACE TO START IS AT THE BEGINNING. I HATE TO START WITH SUCH A **REDUNDANT** QUESTION. DO... DO EITHER OF YOU HAVE ANY **ENEMIES**?

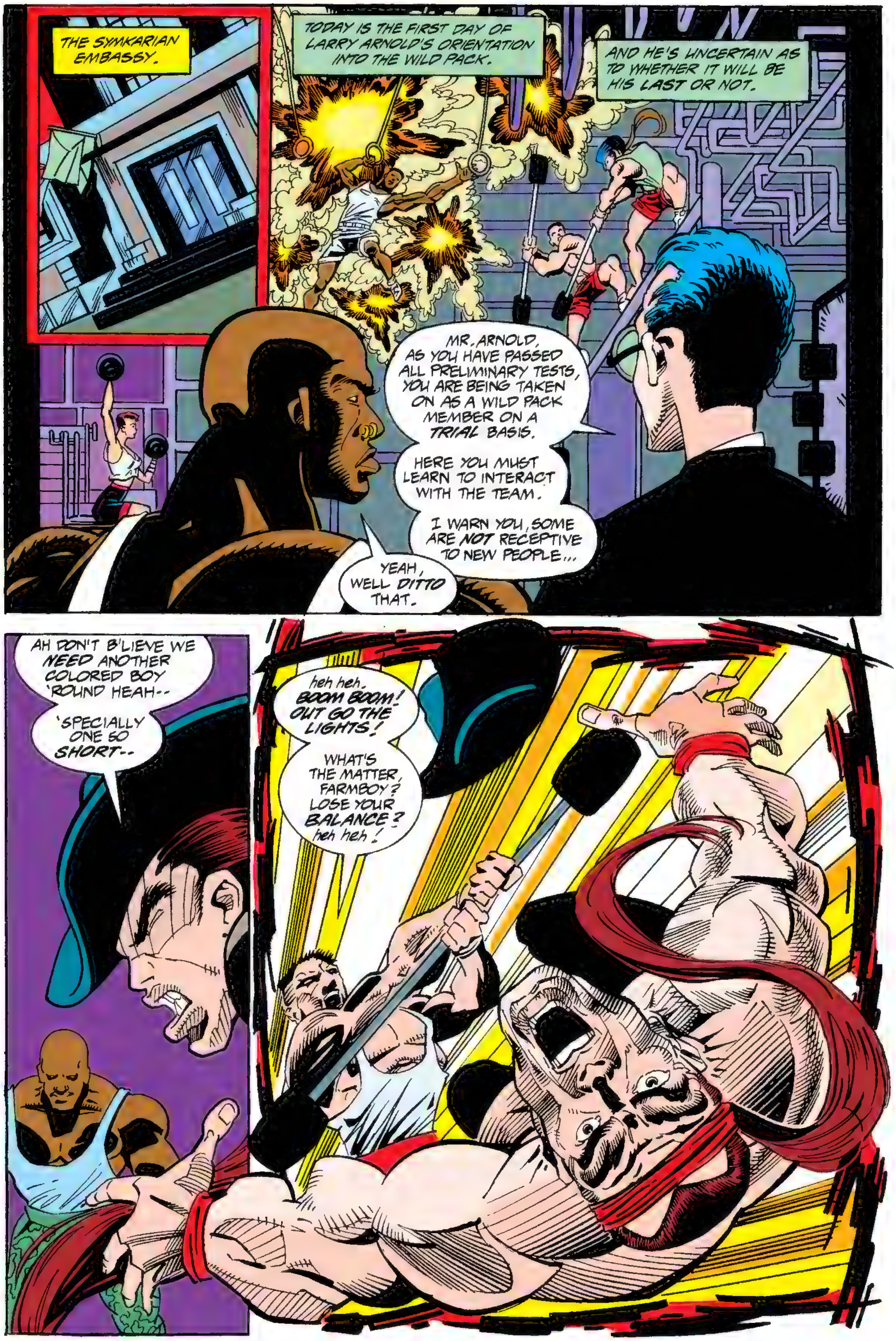

OUTSIDE, A SILVER-COLORED LIMOUSINE SITS PARKED, DRAWING CURIOUS STARES.
ITS DRIVER IS CAREFULLY EYING EACH PASSERBY, BUT SOMEHOW MISSING ONE...
IT'S... HOWDY DOODY TIME...
HOW--?
I HATE THAT PUPPET!
WOO-WOO! EVERYONE'S A CRITIC!
GUESS I BETTER MAKE LIKE A TREE-- AND GET OUT OF HERE!
GOOD MOVE.
SHEYAHH... AS IF!
AEE!!!
KRAK
THAKK
PEOPLE GOTTA LEARN TO FIRE GUNS, INSTEAD OF JUST POINTIN' AT PEOPLE! SHEEE!

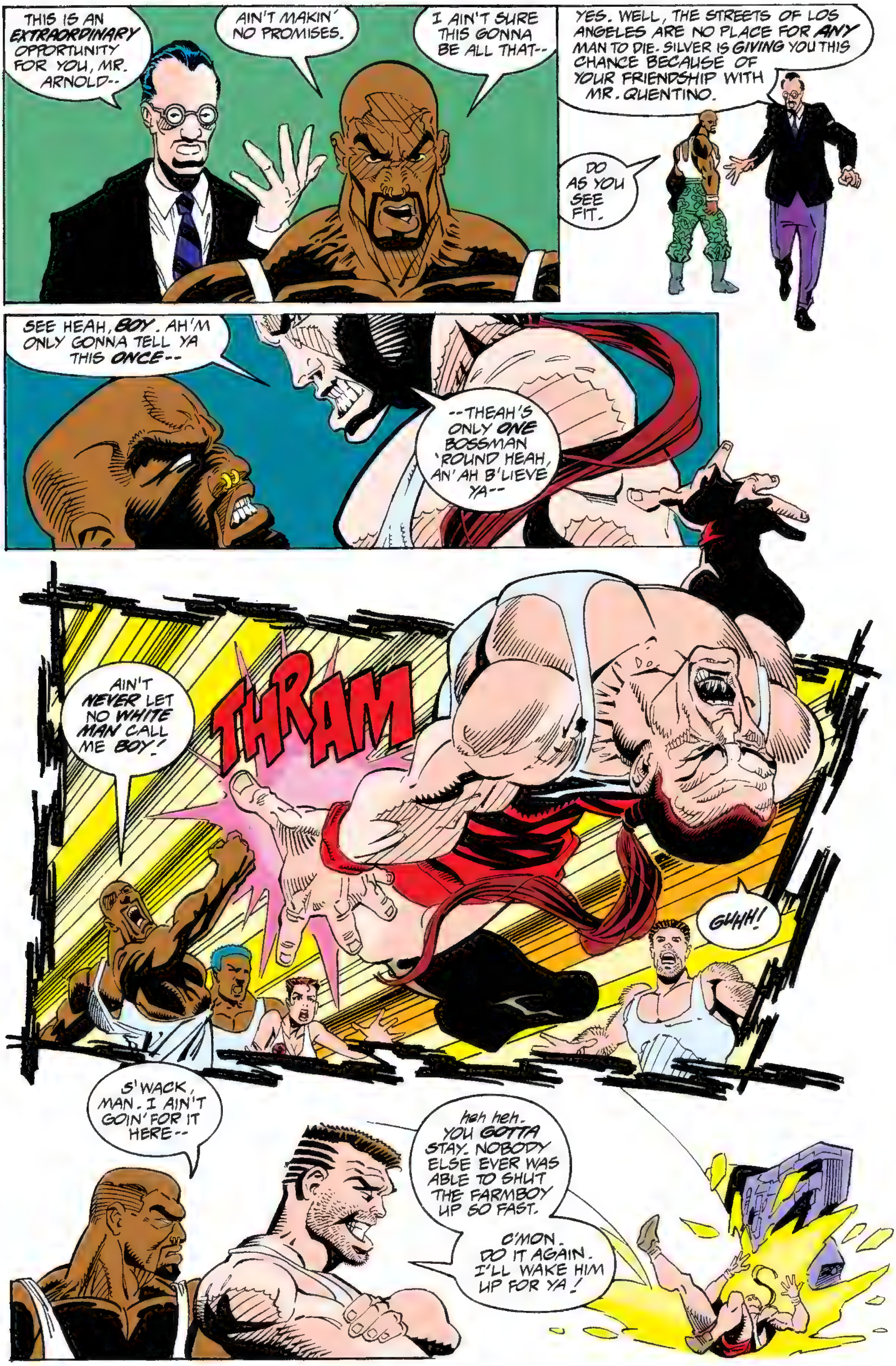

THE PLAZA HOTEL, ONE OF MANHATTAN'S FINEST AND MOST EXPENSIVE PLACES TO STAY.
IT IS NOT A PLACE KNOWN FOR ATTRACTING TROUBLE.
PIECE OF CAKE.
YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK YOU'D GET AWAY WITH EMBEZZLING FROM SILVER SABLE INTERNATIONAL AS LONG AS I'M ON HER PAYROLL, DID YOU?
YOU DO REMEMBER ME. PALADIN. HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL?
AND YOU, YOU WANTED TO CUT MY WAGES WHEN YOU WERE WORKING FOR MS. SABLE, DIDN'T YOU, JONATHAN?
YOU SEE? I DO EARN EVERY PENNY.
WHA-- WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
DEPENDS ON YOU. WE HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU DID WITH THE MONEY, AND WHY YOU TOOK IT.
YOU GIVE ME WHAT I NEED, WITH NO FURTHER BALONEY, AND MAYBE YOU GET TO FATHER A CHILD SOMEDAY.
BUT IT WASN'T ME WHO--
DON'T INSULT ME.
I'VE BEEN ON YOU FOR WEEKS. NOW I'M BORED.
SO WE'LL DO IT THE HARD WAY.
YOU THINK ABOUT THAT WHILE I USE YOUR PHONE--

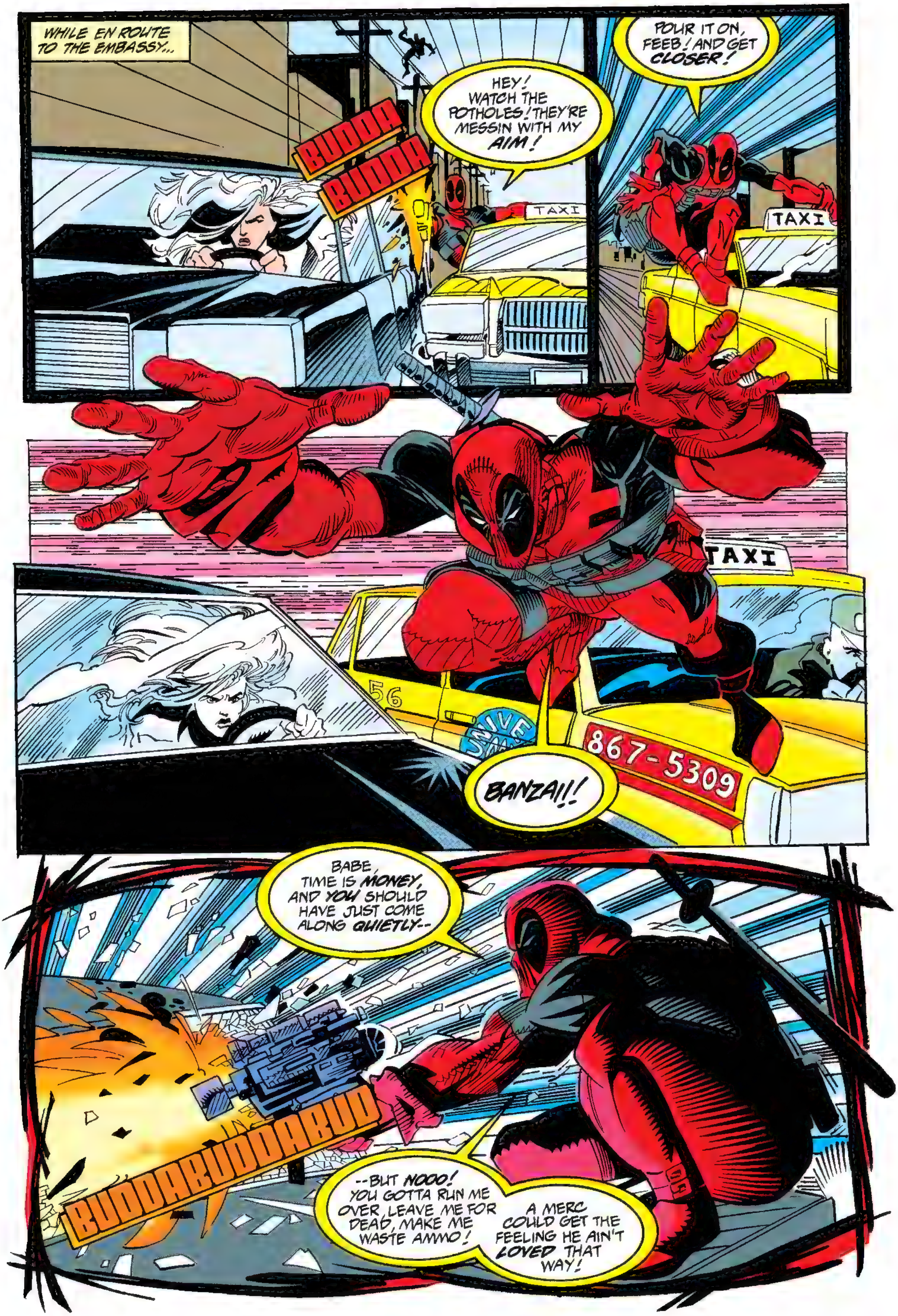

--COULD POTENTIALLY PUT SOME OF YOUR MORE CONTROVERSIAL EMPLOYEES ON--
UM... EX-EXCUSE ME, MS. GABLE.
BRRRIIINGG!
FOGGY NELSON-- YES. YES, SHE'S STILL HERE--
YES, OF COURSE.
IT'S THE SYMKARIAN EMBASSY... FOR YOU.
YES.
I SEE. I WANT A FULL REPORT.
I APOLOGIZE FOR BEING ABRUPT, MR. NELSON, BUT I AM NEEDED.
THAT'S OKAY.
I HAVE ENOUGH TO GET STARTED WITH. I'LL... I'LL BE IN TOUCH.
HOW IRONIC, SILVER SABLE SHOULD TRY TO SECURE THE SERVICES OF MY "DEAD" ALTER-EGO CONSIDERING OUR... CONFLICTS OVER EDDIE PASSIM A WHILE BACK.*
BACK WHEN I WAS MATT MURDOCK, AS WELL AS DAREDEVIL....
*DAREDEVIL #320.--CRAIG

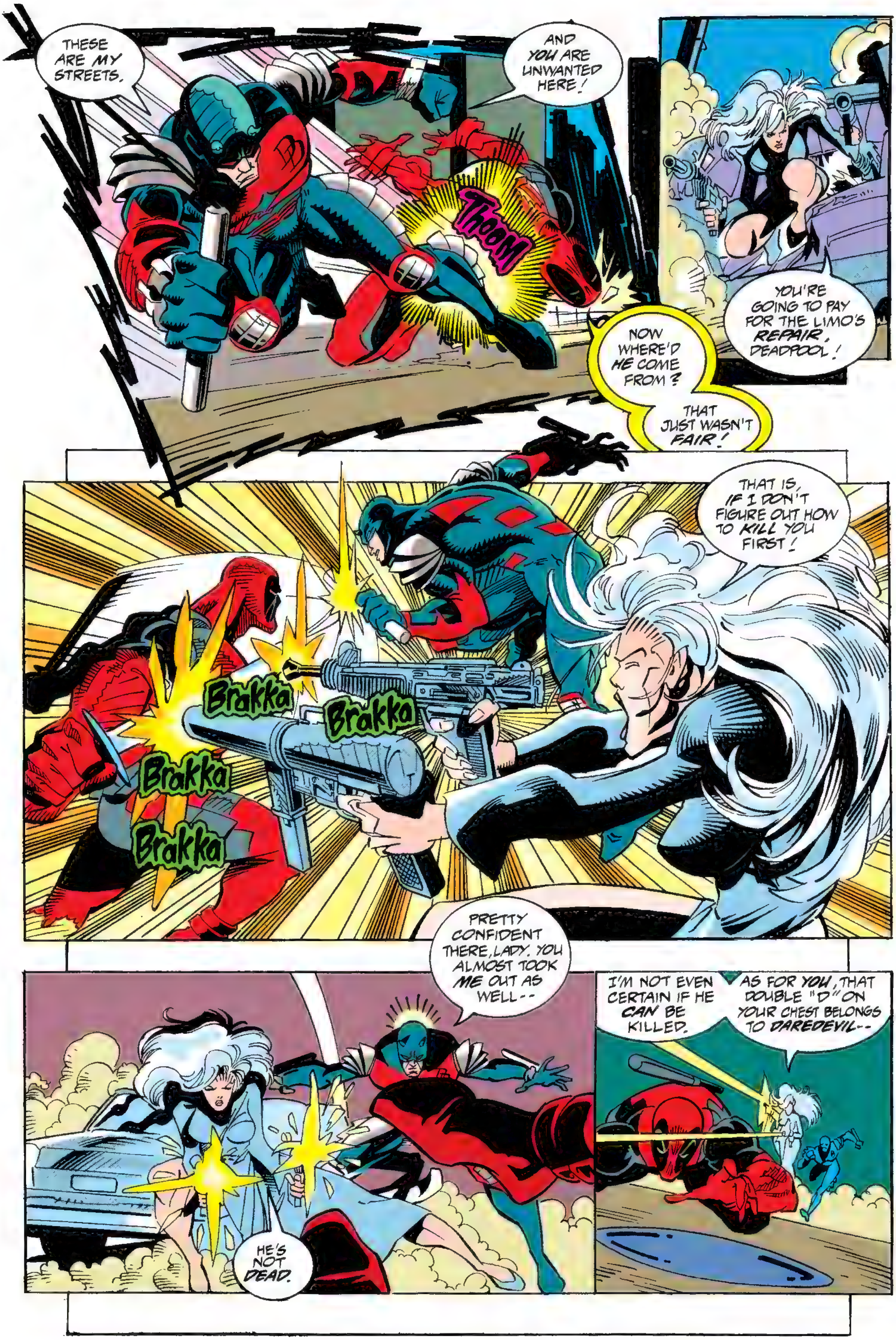

BACK TO THE SYMKARIAN EMBASSY. RIGHT NOW.
YES, MA'AM.
ON SECOND THOUGHT, FORGET IT--
--THE UNION CHANGED DRIVERS, AND WE DON'T DO EMBASSIES!
BEEN A LONG TIME, EH?
DEAD-POOL!
IT HAS NOT BEEN LONG ENOUGH!
HEY, OW! NOW COME ALONG QUIETLY!
THROK
AND AS YOU COST ME CONSIDERABLE FUNDS THE LAST TIME, DO NOT BE SURPRISED AT MY RELUCTANCE FOR A CHEERFUL REUNION!
GUESS SHE HOLDS A GRUDGE..

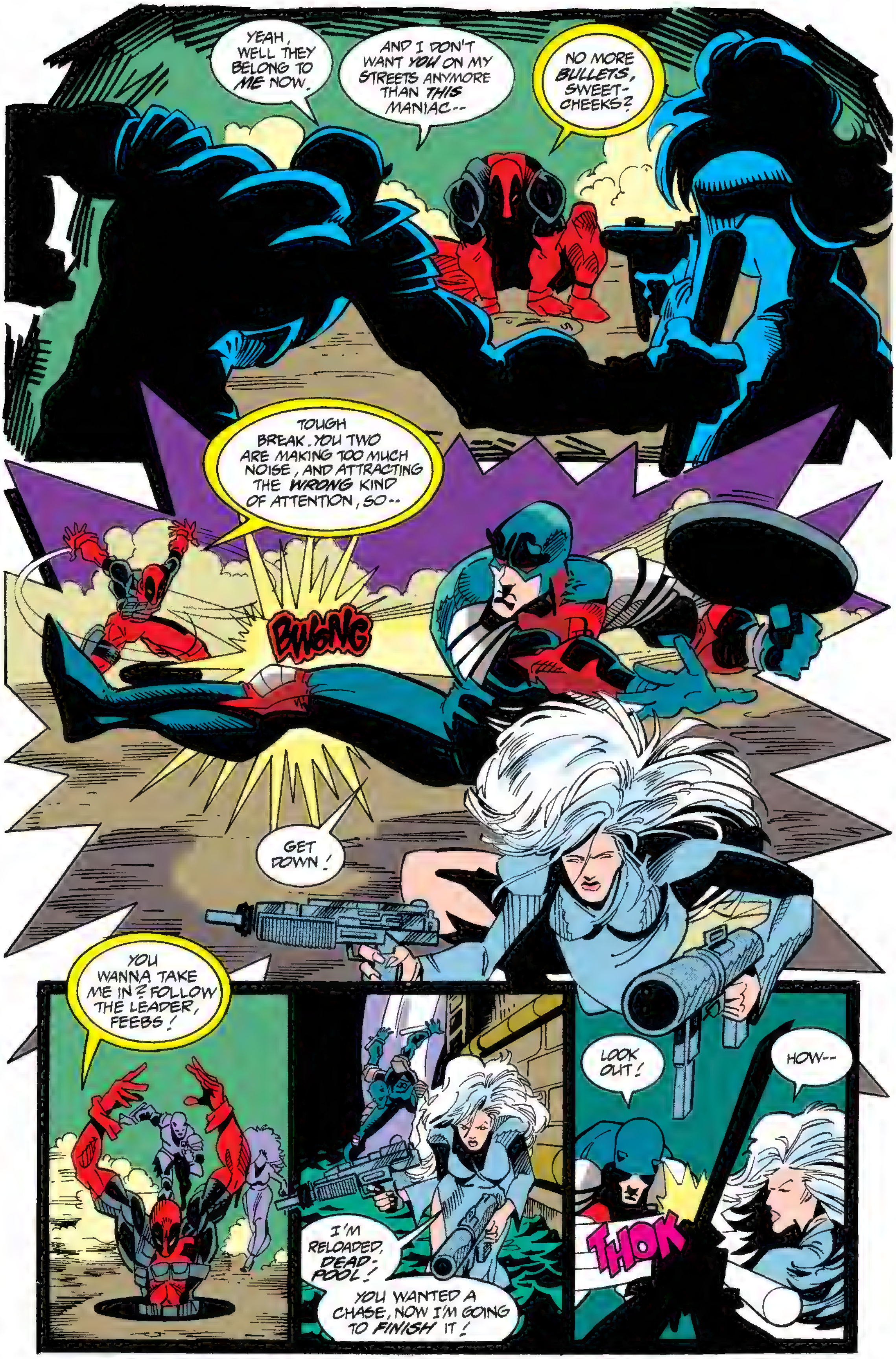

CONSIDER YOURSELF *FORTUNATE* I AM IN A *HURRY*.
WHOKK
I CANNOT IMAGINE *WHICH* OF MY ENEMIES WOULD SEND DEADPOOL AFTER ME.
HAD I THE LUXURY OF TIME I WOULD DEARLY LOVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BEAT IT OUT OF HIM.
I HAVE NO *TIME* FOR YOUR GAMES, DEADPOOL.
NOT EVEN *TAG*?
SKREE
GOODBYE.
WHUNCH
YOW. I FORGOT WHAT A *TEMPER* SHE HAS.
WONDER IF SHE *REMEMBERED* I'M PRACTICALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE--
--OR MAYBE SHE WANTED ME DEAD--
--OR MAYBE SHE DIDN'T EVEN *CARE*--
NAH--HOW COULD SHE *NOT* CARE ABOUT-- *YO! TAXIMAN!*
TAXI
LUCKY DAY, PAL. FOLLOW THAT LIMO, YUK YUK.
CAB
UHH... UHHH... UHHH...
YOUR LINE IS "RIGHT AWAY, SIR! I'VE BEEN LONGING FOR A CAR CHASE ALL DAY!"

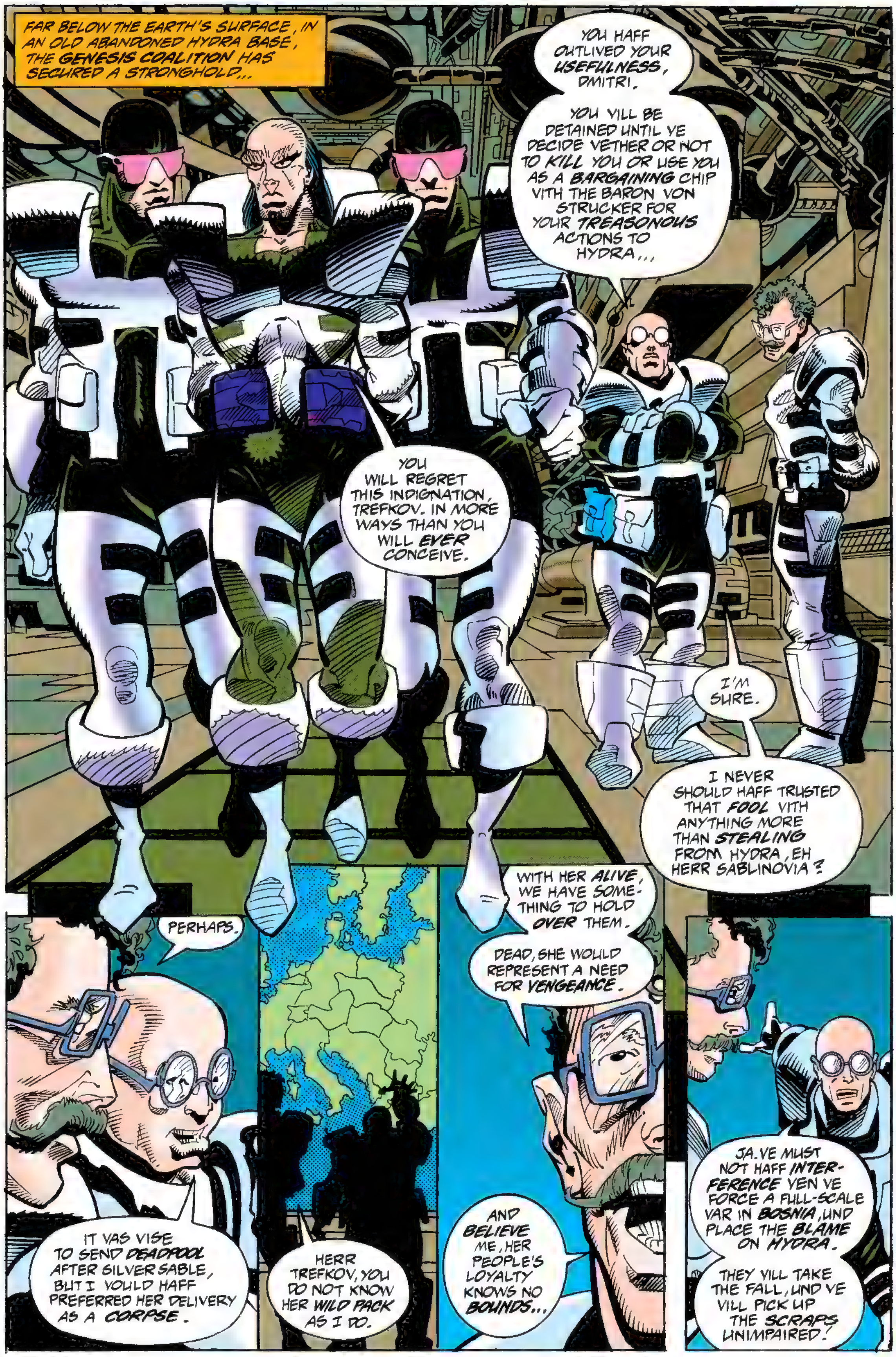

THE SYMKARIAN EMBASSY.
TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF LARRY ARNOLD'S ORIENTATION INTO THE WILD PACK.
AND HE'S UNCERTAIN AS TO WHETHER IT WILL BE HIS *LAST* OR NOT.
MR. ARNOLD, AS YOU HAVE PASSED ALL PRELIMINARY TESTS, YOU ARE BEING TAKEN ON AS A WILD PACK MEMBER ON A *TRIAL* BASIS.
HERE YOU MUST LEARN TO INTERACT WITH THE TEAM.
I WARN YOU, SOME ARE *NOT* RECEPTIVE TO NEW PEOPLE...
YEAH, WELL *DITTO* THAT.
AH DON'T B'LIEVE WE *NEED* ANOTHER COLORED BOY 'ROUND HEAH--
'SPECIALLY ONE SO *SHORT*--
heh heh. *BOOM BOOM! OUT GO THE LIGHTS!*
WHAT'S THE MATTER, FARMBOY? LOSE YOUR *BALANCE?* heh heh!

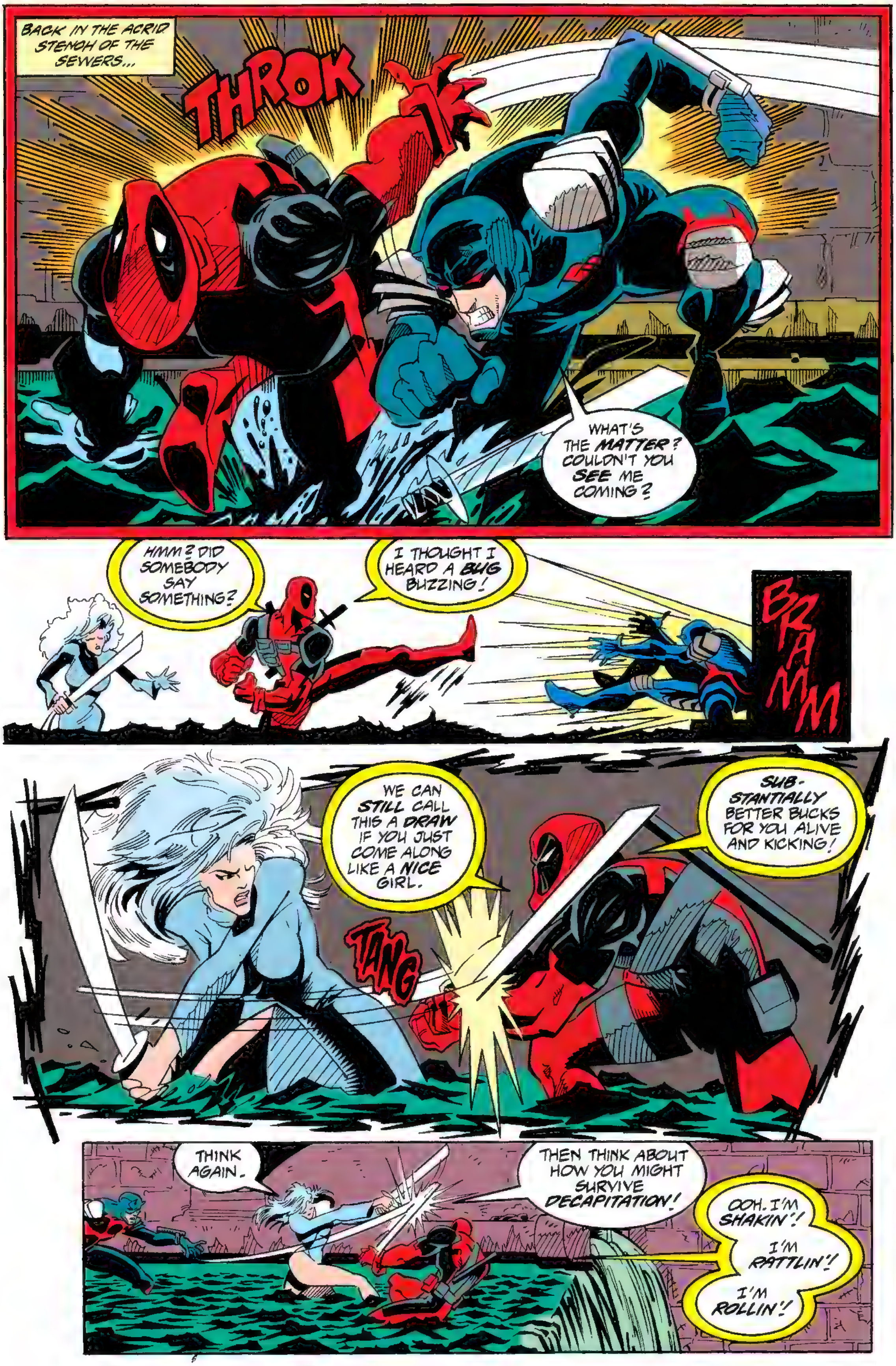

THIS IS AN *EXTRAORDINARY* OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU, MR. ARNOLD--
AIN'T MAKIN' NO PROMISES.
I AIN'T SURE THIS GONNA BE ALL THAT--
YES. WELL, THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELES ARE NO PLACE FOR *ANY* MAN TO DIE. SILVER IS *GIVING* YOU THIS CHANCE BECAUSE OF YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH MR. QUENTINO.
DO AS YOU SEE FIT.
SEE HEAH, *BOY*. AH'M ONLY GONNA TELL YA THIS *ONCE*--
--THEAH'S ONLY *ONE* BOSSMAN 'ROUND HEAH, AN' AH B'LIEVE YA--
AIN'T *NEVER* LET NO *WHITE MAN* CALL ME *BOY*!
THRAM
GUHH!
S'WACK, MAN. I AIN'T GOIN' FOR IT HERE--
heh heh. YOU *GOTTA* STAY. NOBODY ELSE EVER WAS ABLE TO SHUT THE FARMBOY UP SO FAST.
C'MON. DO IT AGAIN. I'LL WAKE HIM UP FOR YA!

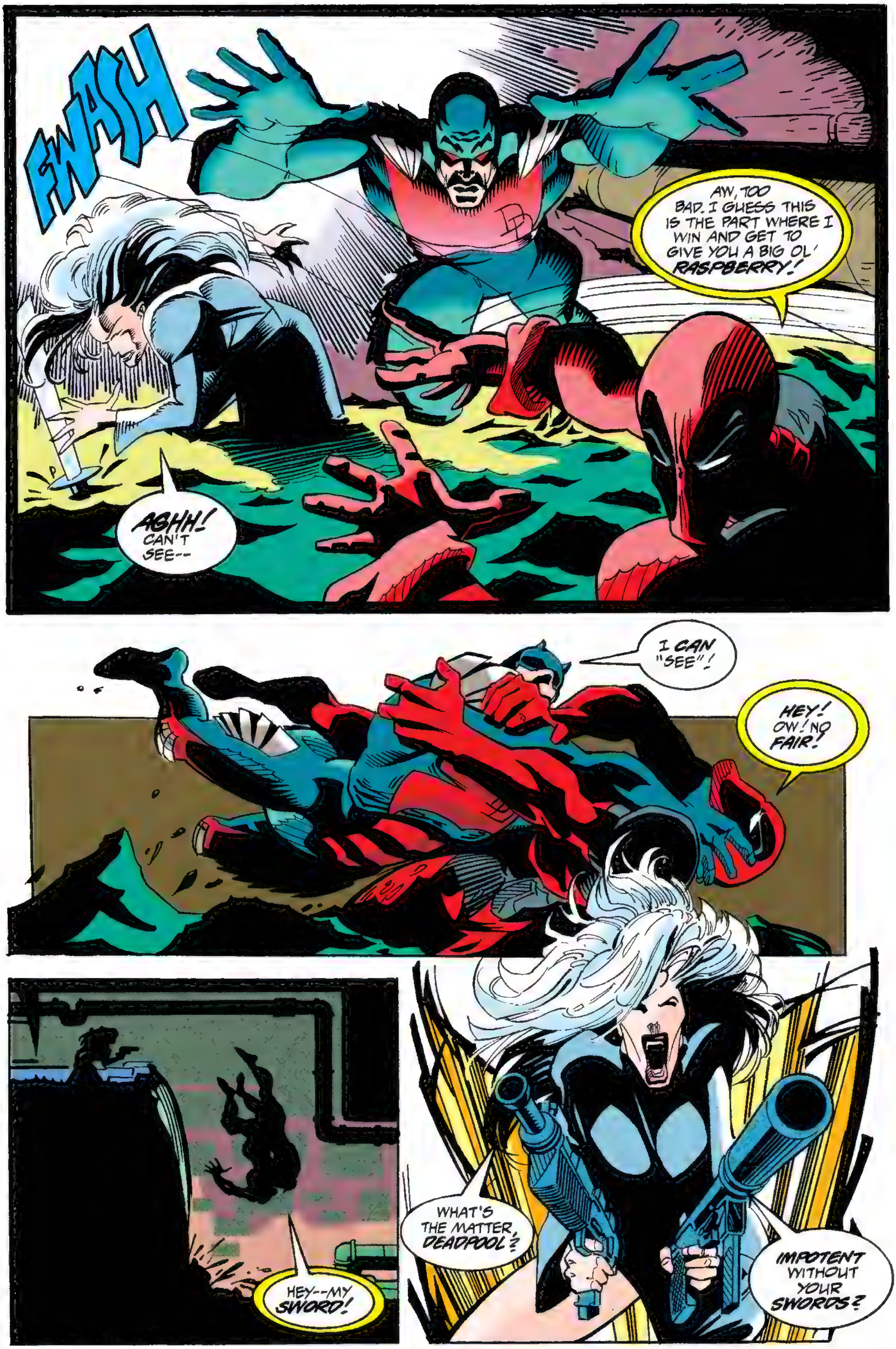

WHILE EN ROUTE TO THE EMBASSY...
BUDDA BUDDA
HEY! WATCH THE POTHOLES! THEY'RE MESSIN WITH MY AIM!
TAXI
POUR IT ON, FEEB! AND GET CLOSER!
TAXI
TAXI
56
867-5309
BANZAI!!
BABE, TIME IS MONEY, AND YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST COME ALONG QUIETLY--
BUDDABUDDABUD
--BUT NOOO! YOU GOTTA RUN ME OVER, LEAVE ME FOR DEAD, MAKE ME WASTE AMMO!
A MERC COULD GET THE FEELING HE AIN'T LOVED THAT WAY!

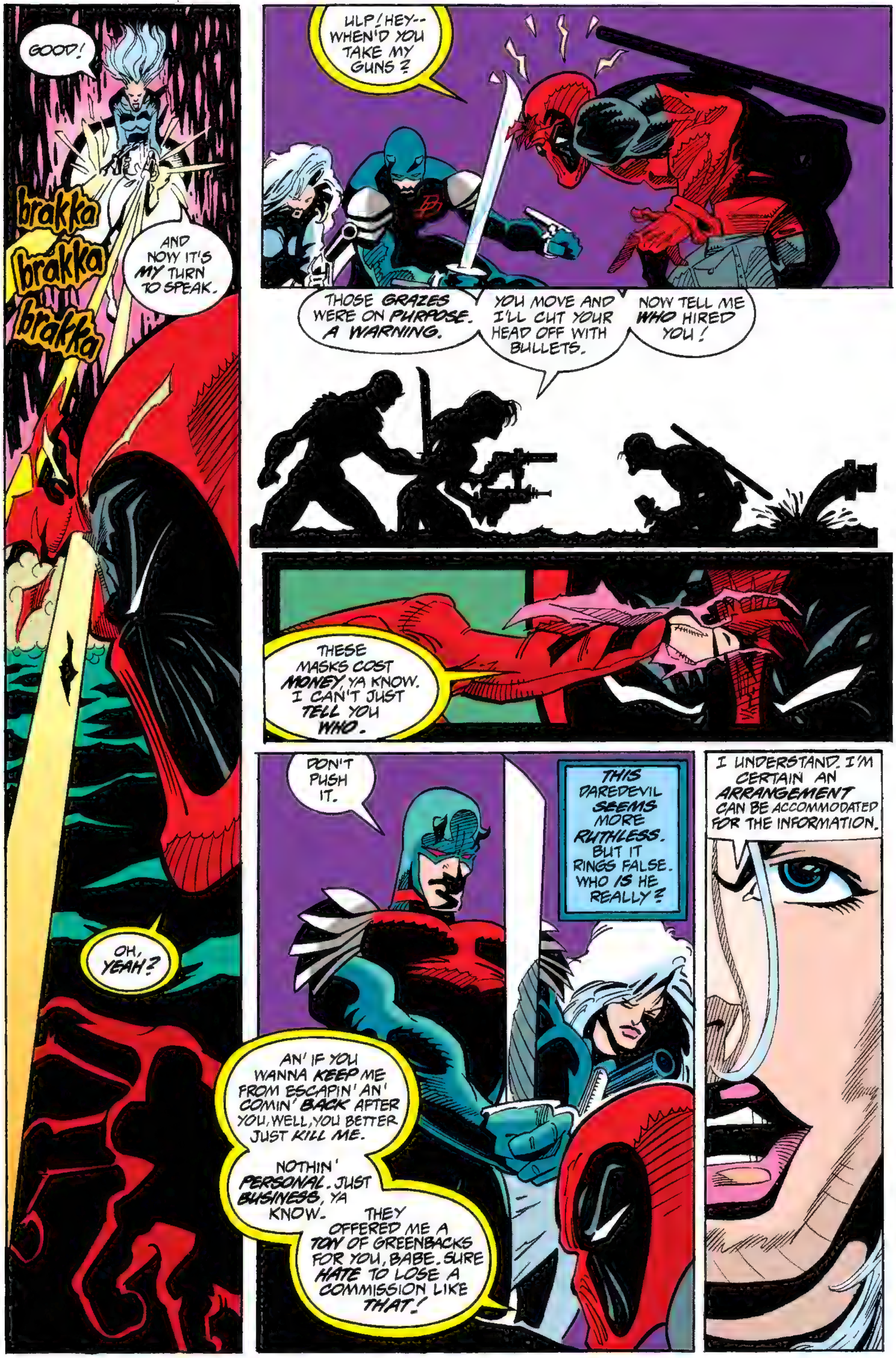

THESE ARE *MY* STREETS,
AND *YOU* ARE UNWANTED HERE!
THOOM
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THE LIMO'S *REPAIR*, DEADPOOL!
NOW WHERE'D *HE* COME FROM?
THAT JUST WASN'T *FAIR*!
THAT IS, *IF* I DON'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO *KILL* YOU FIRST!
Brakka
Brakka
Brakka
Brakka
PRETTY CONFIDENT THERE, LADY. YOU ALMOST TOOK *ME* OUT AS WELL--
HE'S NOT *DEAD*.
I'M NOT EVEN CERTAIN IF HE *CAN* BE KILLED.
AS FOR *YOU*, THAT DOUBLE "D" ON YOUR CHEST BELONGS TO *DAREDEVIL*--

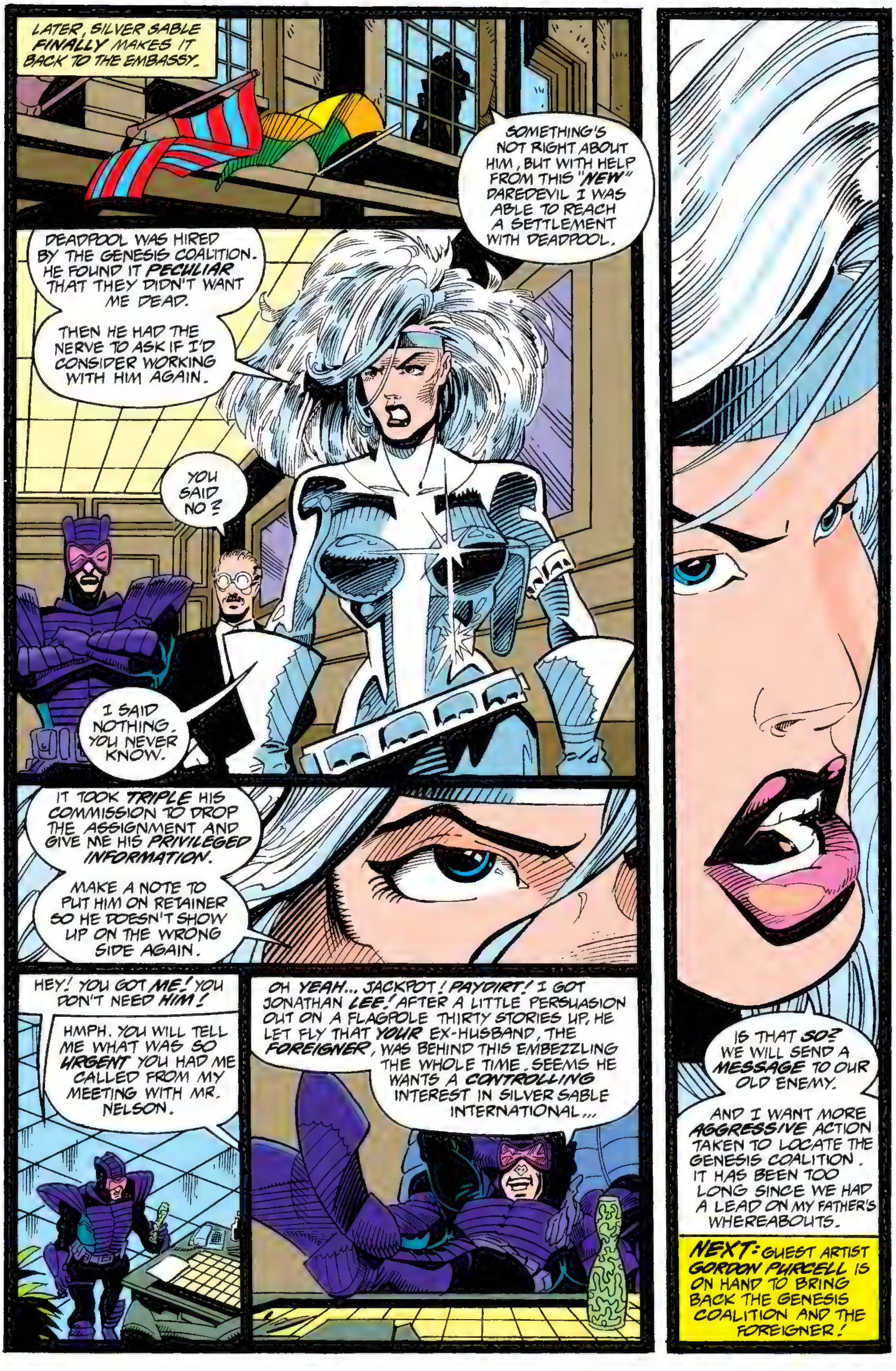

YEAH, WELL THEY BELONG TO *ME* NOW.
AND I DON'T WANT *YOU* ON MY STREETS ANYMORE THAN *THIS* MANIAC--
NO MORE *BULLETS*, SWEET-CHEEKS?
TOUGH BREAK. YOU TWO ARE MAKING TOO MUCH NOISE, AND ATTRACTING THE *WRONG* KIND OF ATTENTION, SO--
BWGNG
GET DOWN!
YOU WANNA TAKE ME IN? FOLLOW THE LEADER, FEEBS!
I'M RELOADED, *DEADPOOL*!
YOU WANTED A CHASE, NOW I'M GOING TO *FINISH* IT!
LOOK OUT!
HOW--
THOK

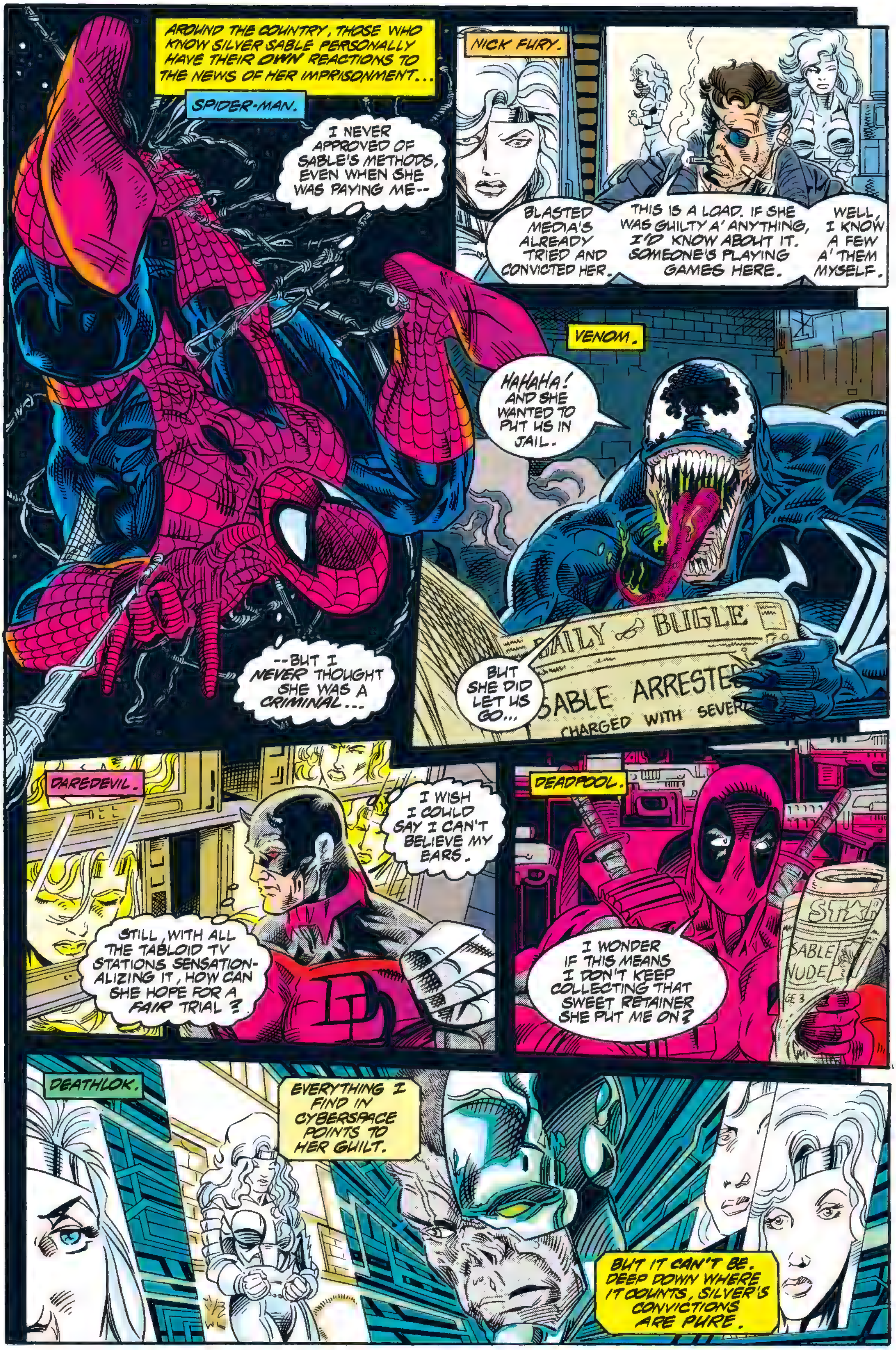

FAR BELOW THE EARTH'S SURFACE, IN AN OLD ABANDONED HYDRA BASE, THE **GENESIS COALITION** HAS SECURED A STRONGHOLD...
YOU HAFF OUTLIVED YOUR **USEFULNESS**, DMITRI.
YOU VILL BE DETAINED UNTIL VE DECIDE VETHER OR NOT TO **KILL** YOU OR USE YOU AS A **BARGAINING** CHIP VITH THE BARON VON STRUCKER FOR YOUR **TREASONOUS** ACTIONS TO HYDRA...
YOU WILL REGRET THIS INDIGNATION, TREFKOV. IN MORE WAYS THAN YOU WILL **EVER** CONCEIVE.
I'M SURE.
I NEVER SHOULD HAFF TRUSTED THAT **FOOL** VITH ANYTHING MORE THAN **STEALING** FROM HYDRA, EH HERR SABLINOVIA?
PERHAPS.
IT VAS VISE TO SEND **DEADPOOL** AFTER SILVER SABLE, BUT I VOULD HAFF PREFERRED HER DELIVERY AS A **CORPSE**.
HERR TREFKOV, YOU DO NOT KNOW HER **WILD PACK** AS I DO.
WITH HER **ALIVE**, WE HAVE SOMETHING TO HOLD **OVER** THEM.
DEAD, SHE WOULD REPRESENT A NEED FOR **VENGEANCE**.
AND **BELIEVE** ME, HER PEOPLE'S LOYALTY KNOWS NO **BOUNDS**...
JA. VE MUST NOT HAFF **INTERFERENCE** VEN VE FORCE A FULL-SCALE VAR IN **BOSNIA**, UND PLACE THE **BLAME** ON **HYDRA**.
THEY VILL TAKE THE FALL, UND VE VILL PICK UP THE **SCRAPS** UNIMPAIRED!


BACK IN THE ACRID STENCH OF THE SEWERS...
THROK
WHAT'S THE MATTER? COULDN'T YOU SEE ME COMING?
HMM? DID SOMEBODY SAY SOMETHING?
I THOUGHT I HEARD A BUG BUZZING!
BRAMM
WE CAN STILL CALL THIS A DRAW IF YOU JUST COME ALONG LIKE A NICE GIRL.
SUB-STANTIALLY BETTER BUCKS FOR YOU ALIVE AND KICKING!
TANG
THINK AGAIN.
THEN THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MIGHT SURVIVE DECAPITATION!
OOH. I'M SHAKIN'! I'M RATTLIN'! I'M ROLLIN'!


FWASH
AW, TOO BAD. I GUESS THIS IS THE PART WHERE I WIN AND GET TO GIVE YOU A BIG OL' RASPBERRY!
AGHH! CAN'T SEE--
I CAN "SEE"!
HEY! OW! NO FAIR!
HEY--MY SWORD!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, DEADPOOL?
IMPOTENT WITHOUT YOUR SWORDS?


GOOD!
brakka brakka brakka
AND NOW IT'S MY TURN TO SPEAK.
OH, YEAH?
ULP! HEY-- WHEN'D YOU TAKE MY GUNS?
THOSE GRAZES WERE ON PURPOSE. A WARNING.
YOU MOVE AND I'LL CUT YOUR HEAD OFF WITH BULLETS.
NOW TELL ME WHO HIRED YOU!
THESE MASKS COST MONEY, YA KNOW. I CAN'T JUST TELL YOU WHO.
DON'T PUSH IT.
THIS DAREDEVIL SEEMS MORE RUTHLESS. BUT IT RINGS FALSE. WHO IS HE REALLY?
AN' IF YOU WANNA KEEP ME FROM ESCAPIN' AN' COMIN' BACK AFTER YOU, WELL, YOU BETTER JUST KILL ME.
NOTHIN' PERSONAL. JUST BUSINESS, YA KNOW. THEY OFFERED ME A TON OF GREENBACKS FOR YOU, BABE. SURE HATE TO LOSE A COMMISSION LIKE THAT!
I UNDERSTAND. I'M CERTAIN AN ARRANGEMENT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED FOR THE INFORMATION.


LATER, SILVER SABLE FINALLY MAKES IT BACK TO THE EMBASSY.
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT ABOUT HIM, BUT WITH HELP FROM THIS "NEW" DAREDEVIL I WAS ABLE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WITH DEADPOOL.
DEADPOOL WAS HIRED BY THE GENESIS COALITION. HE FOUND IT PECULIAR THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT ME DEAD.
THEN HE HAD THE NERVE TO ASK IF I'D CONSIDER WORKING WITH HIM AGAIN.
YOU SAID NO?
I SAID NOTHING. YOU NEVER KNOW.
IT TOOK TRIPLE HIS COMMISSION TO DROP THE ASSIGNMENT AND GIVE ME HIS PRIVILEGED INFORMATION.
MAKE A NOTE TO PUT HIM ON RETAINER SO HE DOESN'T SHOW UP ON THE WRONG SIDE AGAIN.
HEY! YOU GOT ME! YOU DON'T NEED HIM!
HMPH. YOU WILL TELL ME WHAT WAS SO URGENT YOU HAD ME CALLED FROM MY MEETING WITH MR. NELSON.
OH YEAH... JACKPOT! PAYDIRT! I GOT JONATHAN LEE! AFTER A LITTLE PERSUASION OUT ON A FLAGPOLE THIRTY STORIES UP, HE LET FLY THAT YOUR EX-HUSBAND, THE FOREIGNER, WAS BEHIND THIS EMBEZZLING THE WHOLE TIME. SEEMS HE WANTS A CONTROLLING INTEREST IN SILVER SABLE INTERNATIONAL...
IS THAT SO? WE WILL SEND A MESSAGE TO OUR OLD ENEMY.
AND I WANT MORE AGGRESSIVE ACTION TAKEN TO LOCATE THE GENESIS COALITION. IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG SINCE WE HAD A LEAD ON MY FATHER'S WHEREABOUTS.
NEXT: GUEST ARTIST GORDON PURCELL IS ON HAND TO BRING BACK THE GENESIS COALITION AND THE FOREIGNER!


AROUND THE COUNTRY, THOSE WHO KNOW SILVER SABLE PERSONALLY HAVE THEIR OWN REACTIONS TO THE NEWS OF HER IMPRISONMENT...
SPIDER-MAN.
I NEVER APPROVED OF SABLE'S METHODS, EVEN WHEN SHE WAS PAYING ME--
--BUT I NEVER THOUGHT SHE WAS A CRIMINAL...
NICK FURY.
BLASTED MEDIA'S ALREADY TRIED AND CONVICTED HER.
THIS IS A LOAD. IF SHE WAS GUILTY A' ANYTHING, I'D KNOW ABOUT IT. SOMEONE'S PLAYING GAMES HERE.
WELL, I KNOW A FEW A' THEM MYSELF.
VENOM.
HAHAHA! AND SHE WANTED TO PUT US IN JAIL.
BUT SHE DID LET US GO...
DAILY BUGLE
SABLE ARRESTE
CHARGED WITH SEVER
DAREDEVIL.
I WISH I COULD SAY I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EARS.
STILL, WITH ALL THE TABLOID TV STATIONS SENSATIONALIZING IT, HOW CAN SHE HOPE FOR A FAIR TRIAL?
DEADPOOL.
I WONDER IF THIS MEANS I DON'T KEEP COLLECTING THAT SWEET RETAINER SHE PUT ME ON?
STAR
SABLE NUDE
GE 3
DEATHLOK.
EVERYTHING I FIND IN CYBERSPACE POINTS TO HER GUILT.
BUT IT CAN'T BE. DEEP DOWN WHERE IT COUNTS, SILVER'S CONVICTIONS ARE PURE.

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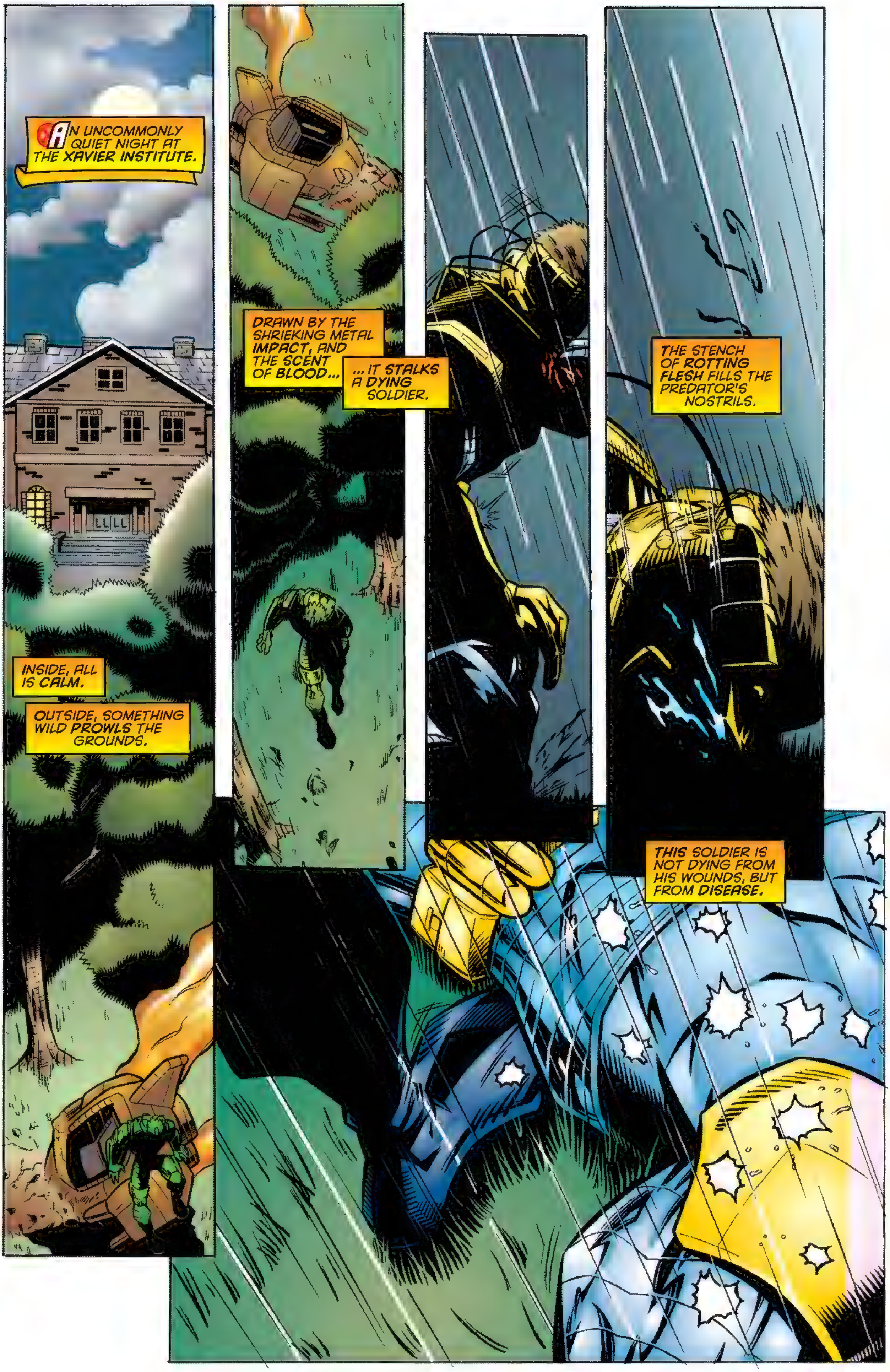
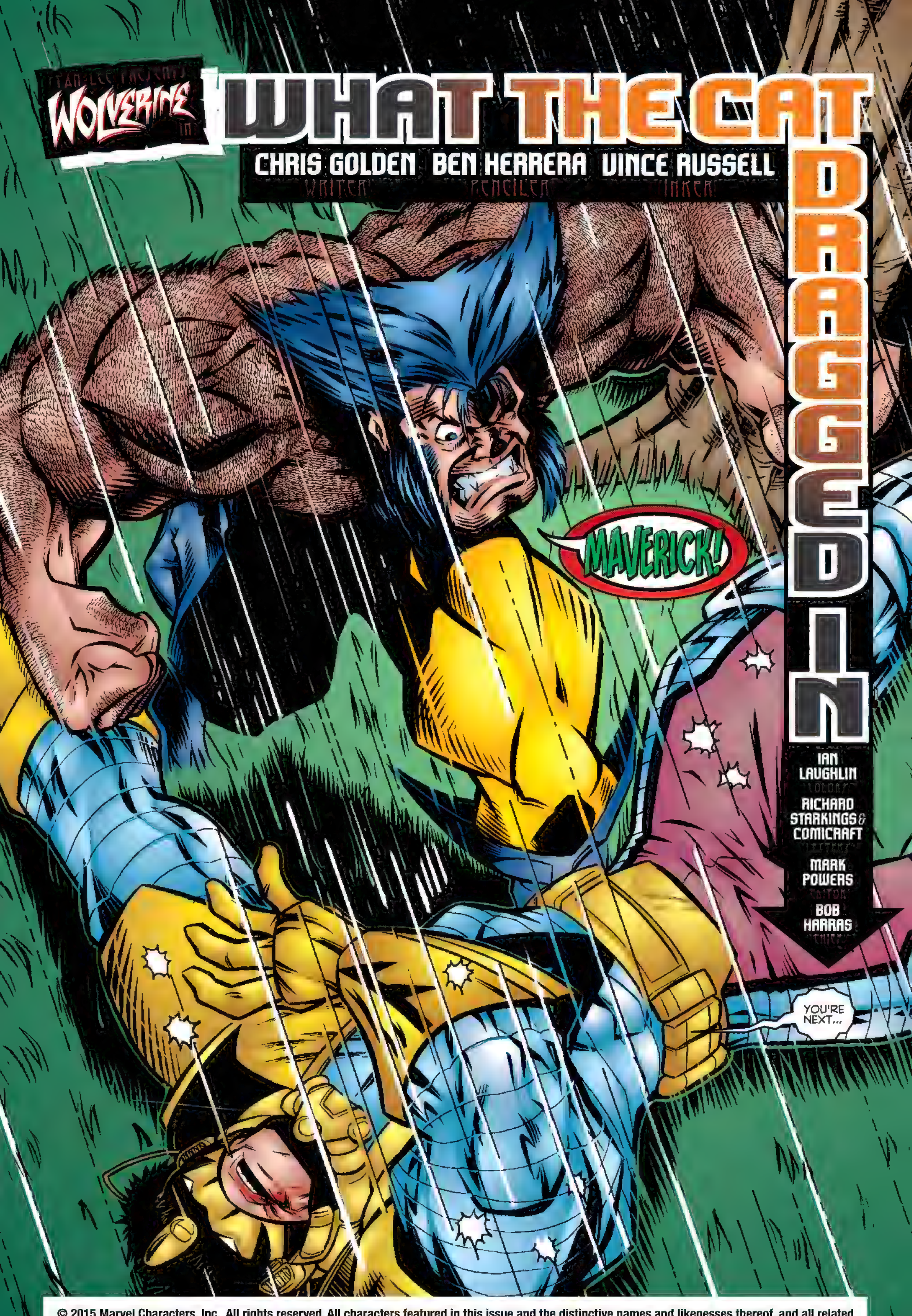

AN UNCOMMONLY QUIET NIGHT AT THE XAVIER INSTITUTE.
INSIDE, ALL IS CALM.
OUTSIDE, SOMETHING WILD PROWLS THE GROUNDS.
DRAWN BY THE SHRIEKING METAL IMPACT, AND THE SCENT OF BLOOD...
...IT STALKS A DYING SOLDIER.
THE STENCH OF ROTTING FLESH FILLS THE PREDATOR'S NOSTRILS.
THIS SOLDIER IS NOT DYING FROM HIS WOUNDS, BUT FROM DISEASE.


STAN LEE PRESENTS
WOLVERINE
IN
WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN
CHRIS GOLDEN WRITER
BEN HERRERA PENCILER
VINCE RUSSELL INKER
IAN LAUGHLIN COLORS
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT LETTERS
MARK POWERS EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF
MAVERICK!
YOU'RE NEXT...

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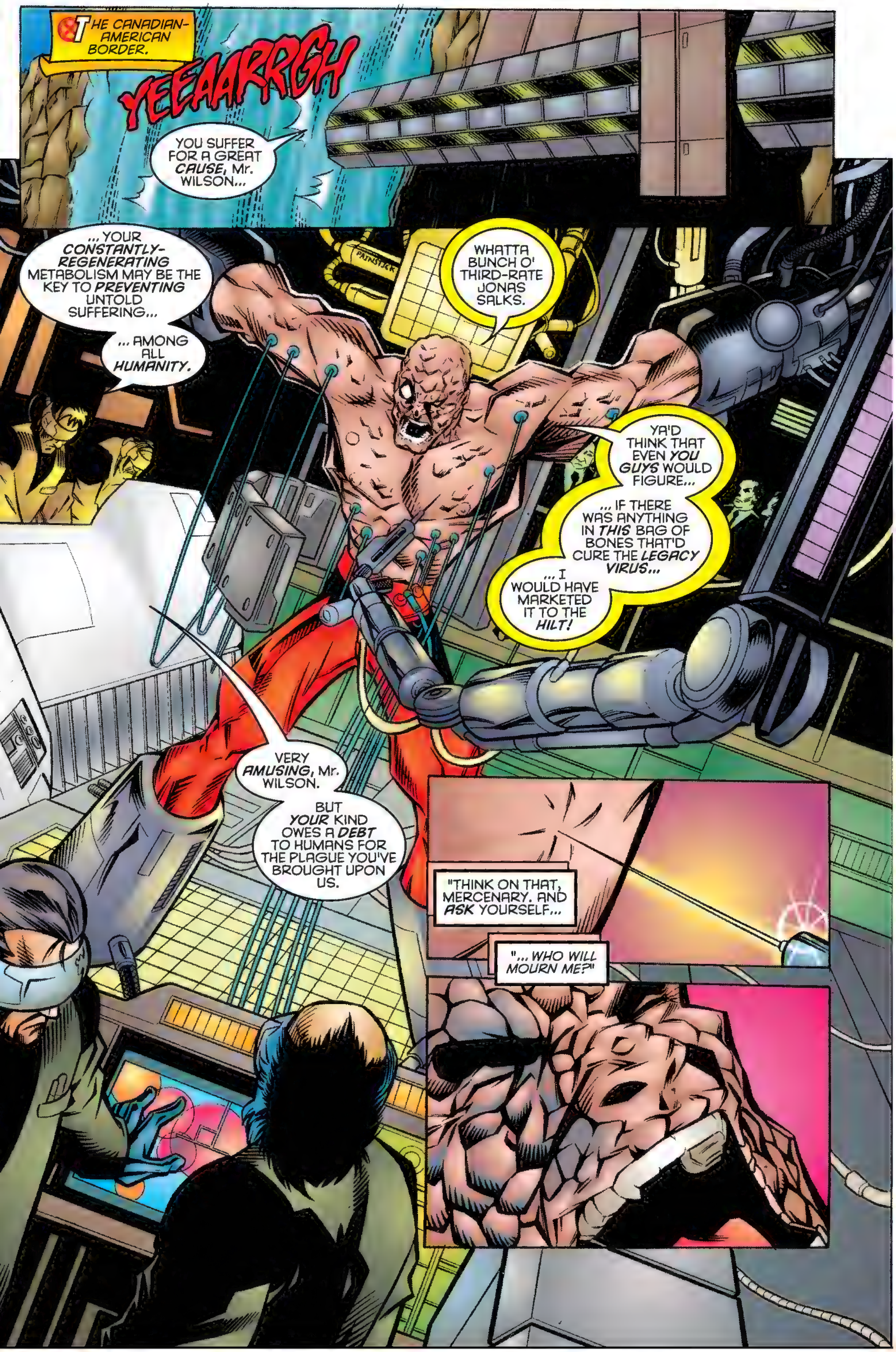
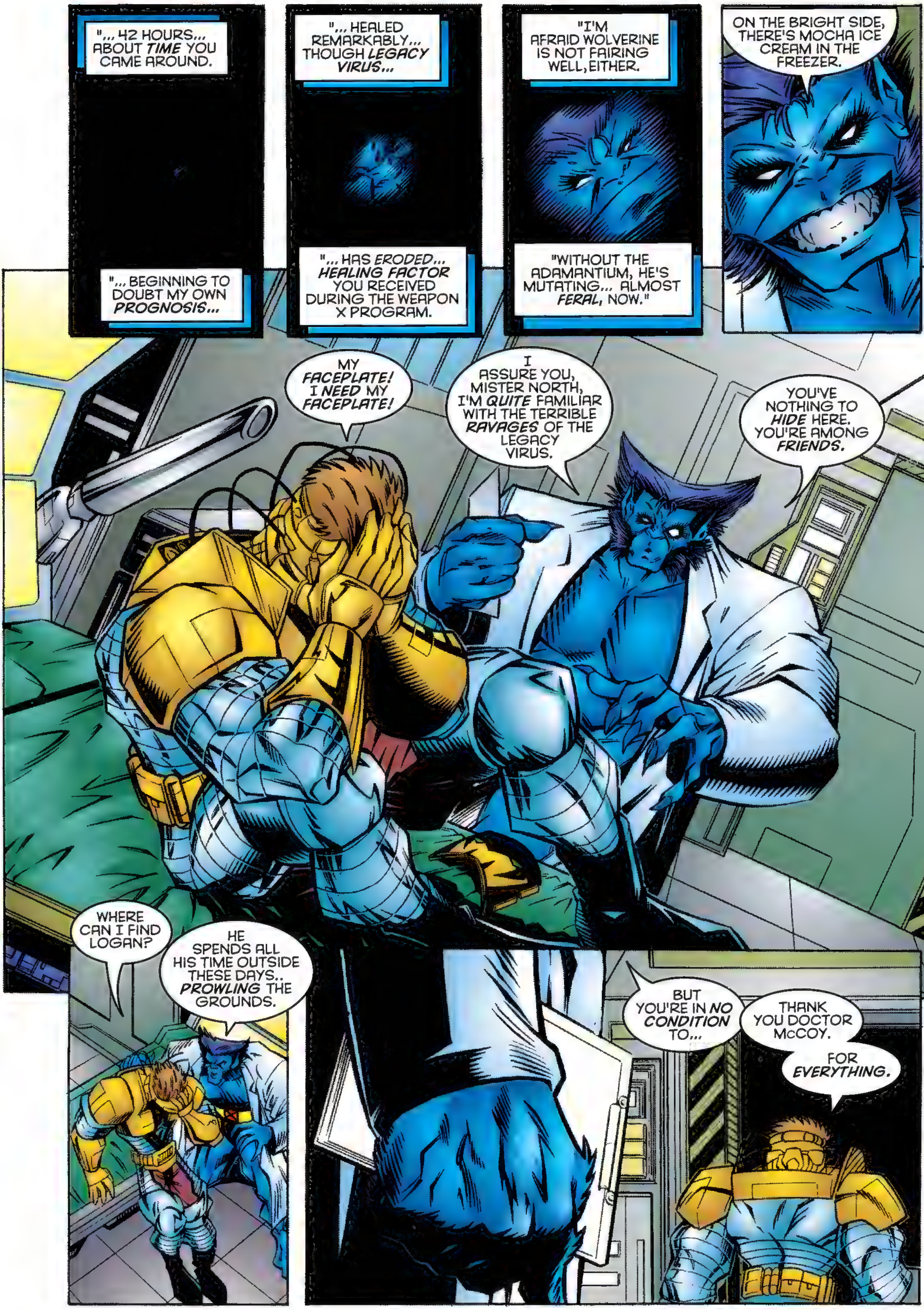
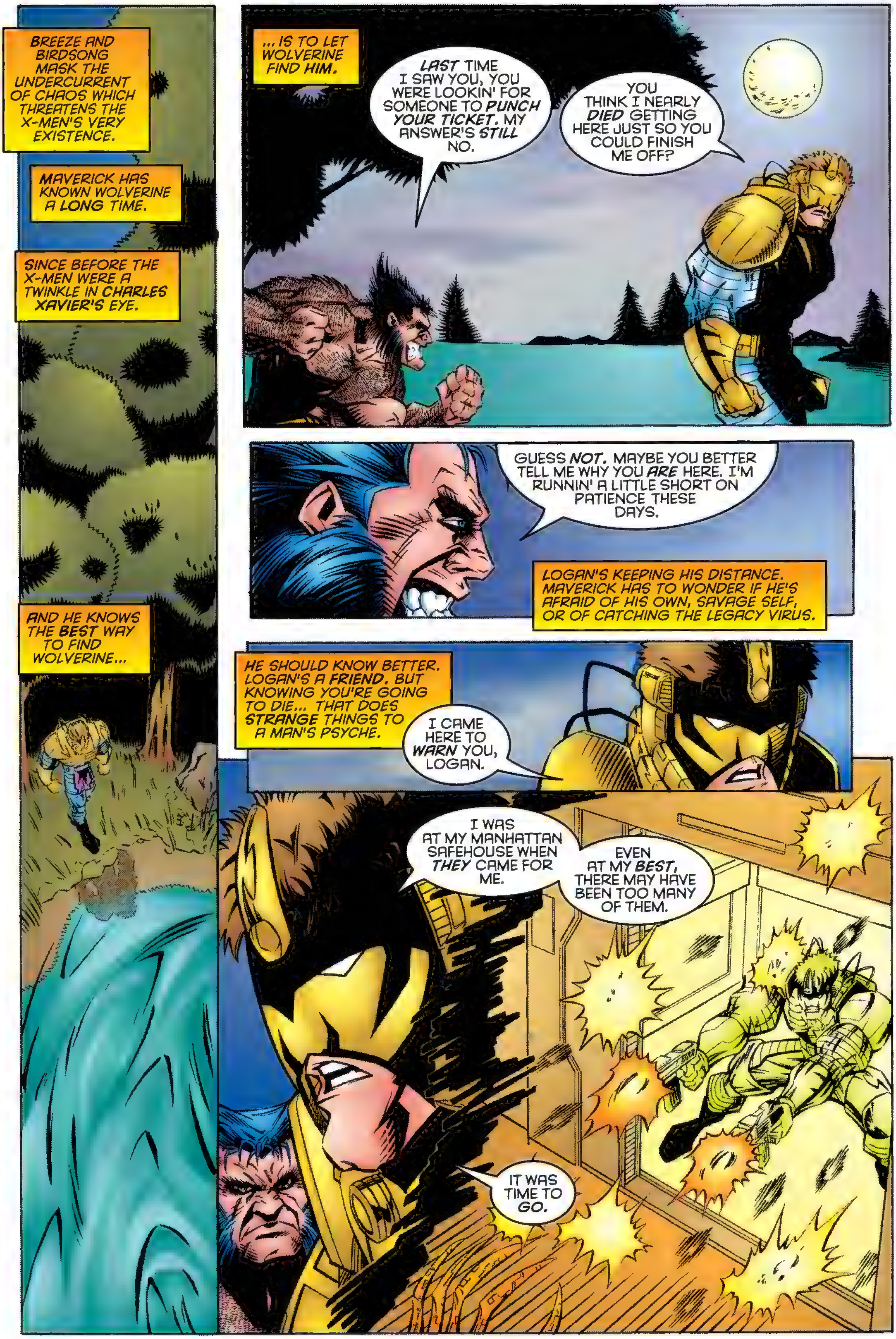
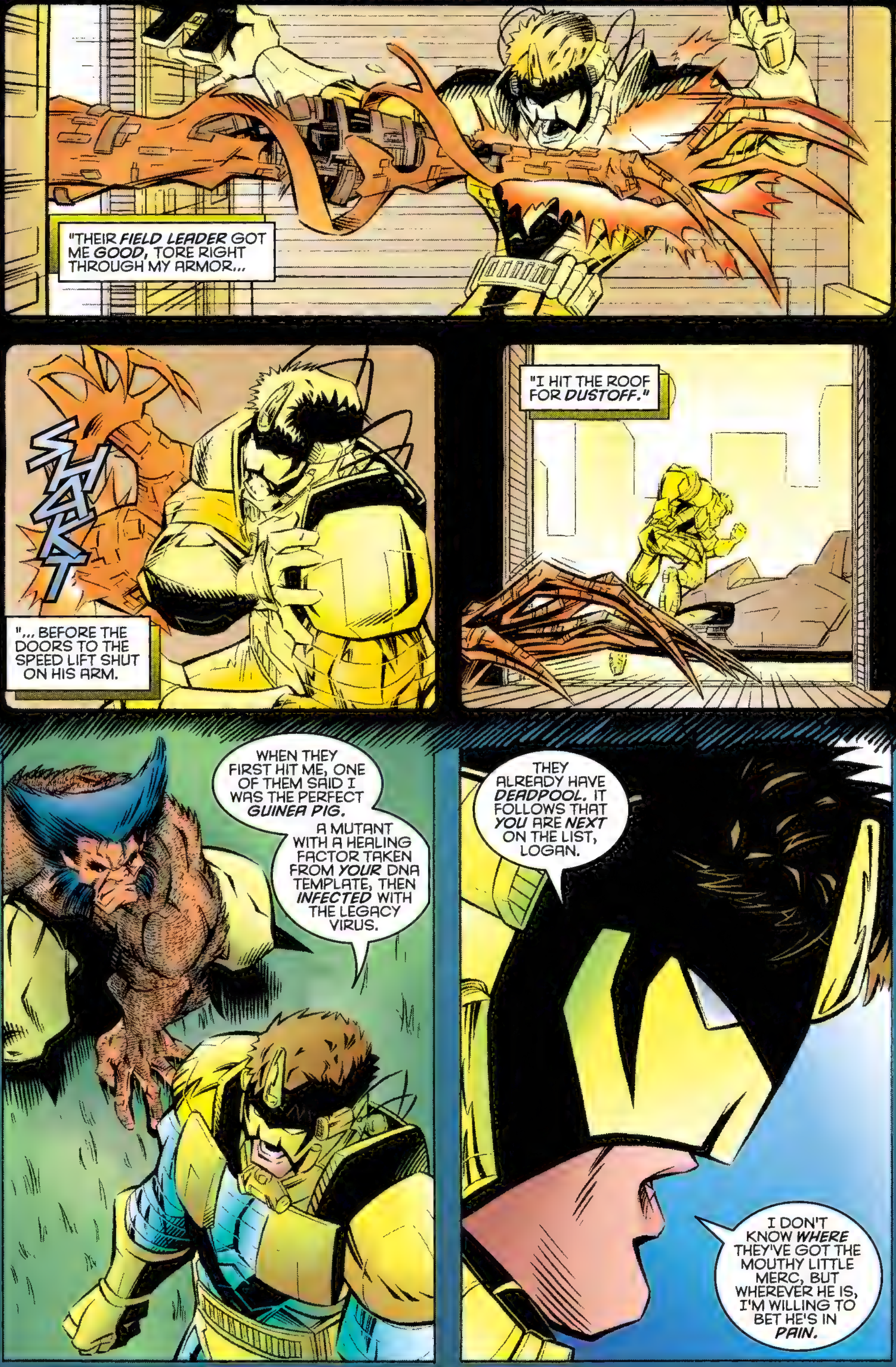
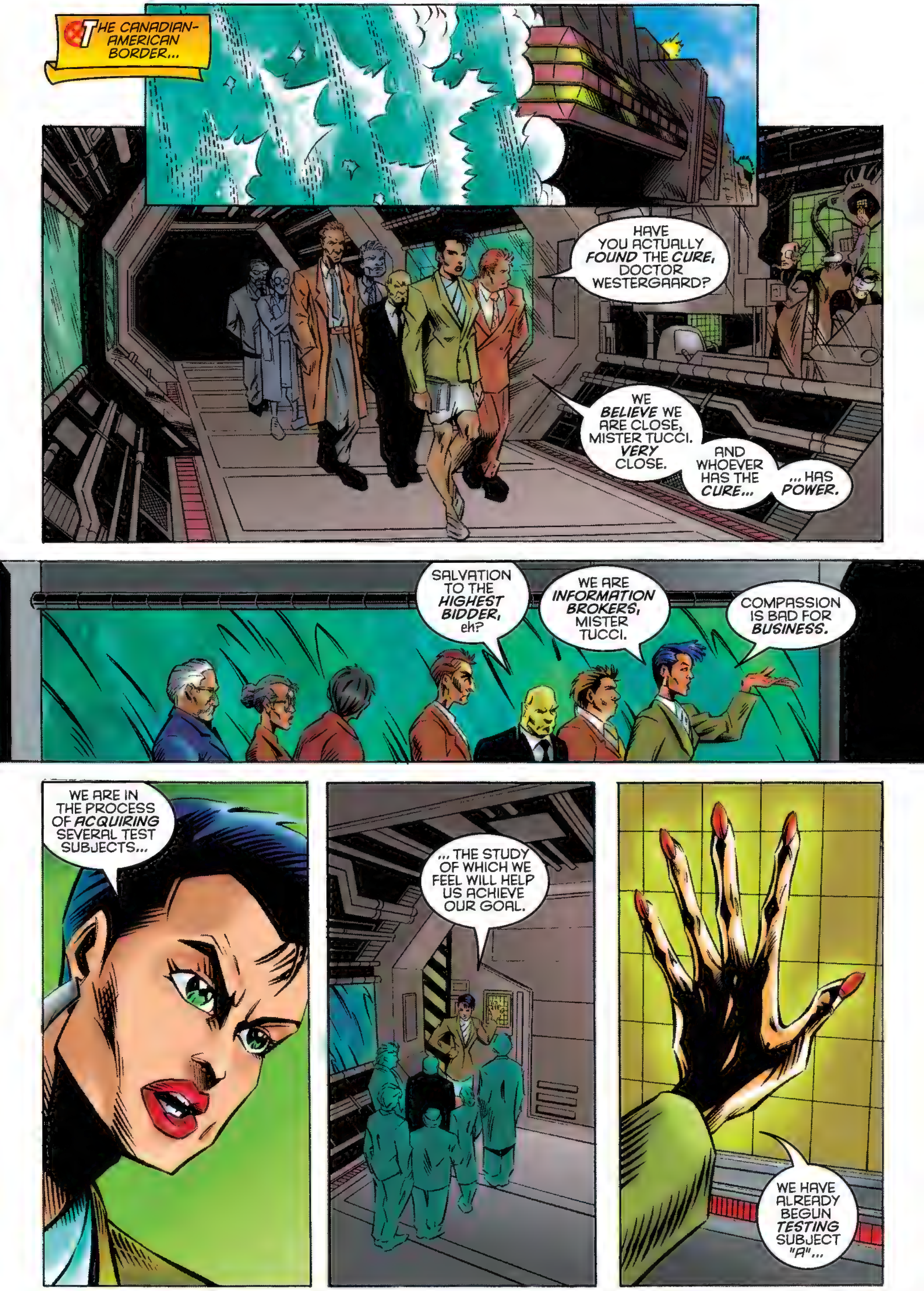
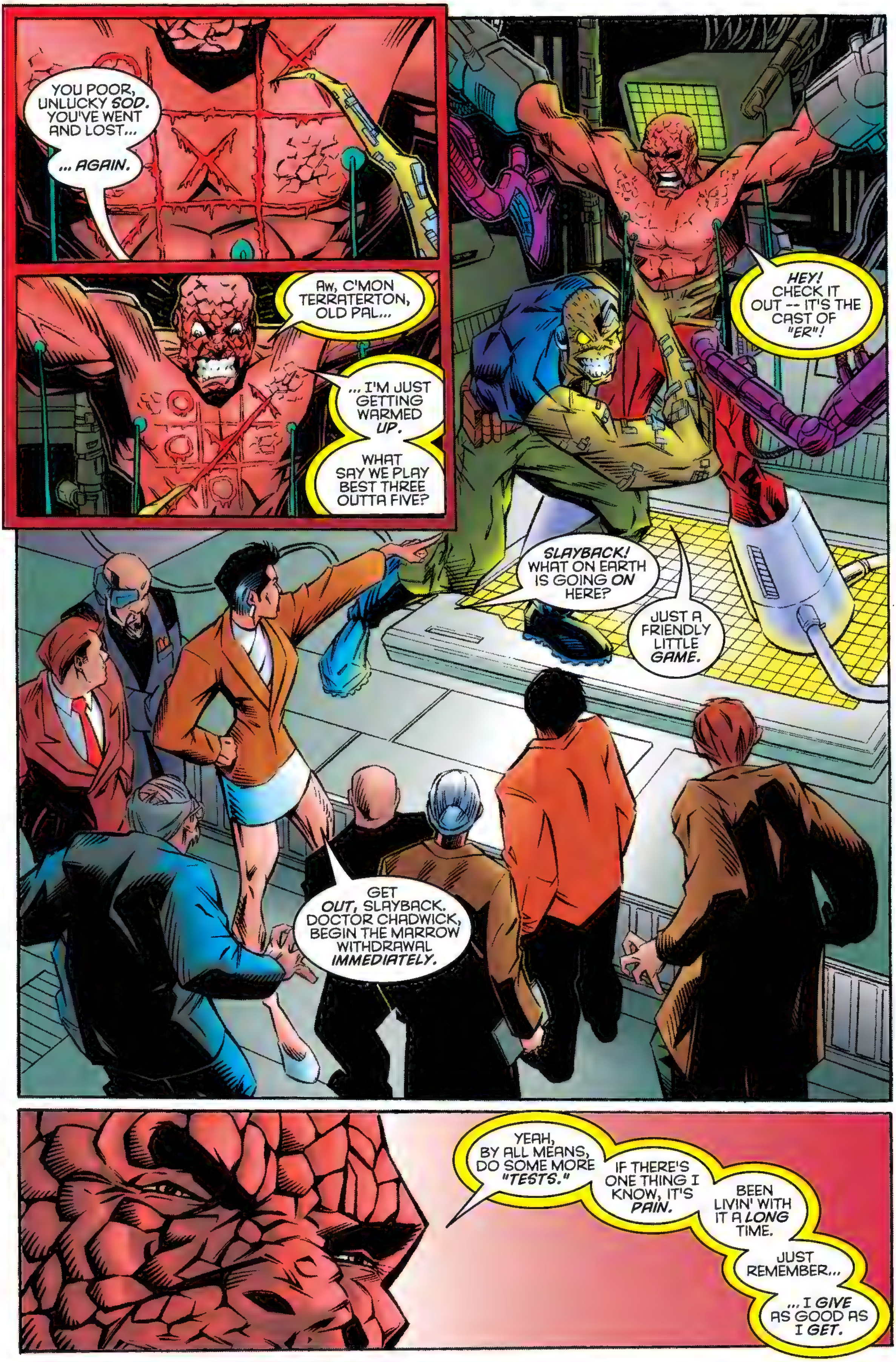

THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN BORDER.
YEEAARRGH
YOU SUFFER FOR A GREAT *CAUSE*, Mr. WILSON...
...YOUR *CONSTANTLY-REGENERATING* METABOLISM MAY BE THE KEY TO *PREVENTING* UNTOLD SUFFERING...
...AMONG ALL *HUMANITY.*
WHATTA BUNCH O' THIRD-RATE JONAS SALKS.
YA'D THINK THAT EVEN *YOU GUYS* WOULD FIGURE...
...IF THERE WAS ANYTHING IN *THIS* BAG OF BONES THAT'D CURE THE *LEGACY VIRUS*...
...I WOULD HAVE MARKETED IT TO THE *HILT!*
VERY *AMUSING*, Mr. WILSON.
BUT *YOUR* KIND OWES A *DEBT* TO HUMANS FOR THE PLAGUE YOU'VE BROUGHT UPON US.
"THINK ON THAT, MERCENARY. AND *ASK* YOURSELF...
"...*WHO WILL MOURN ME?*"

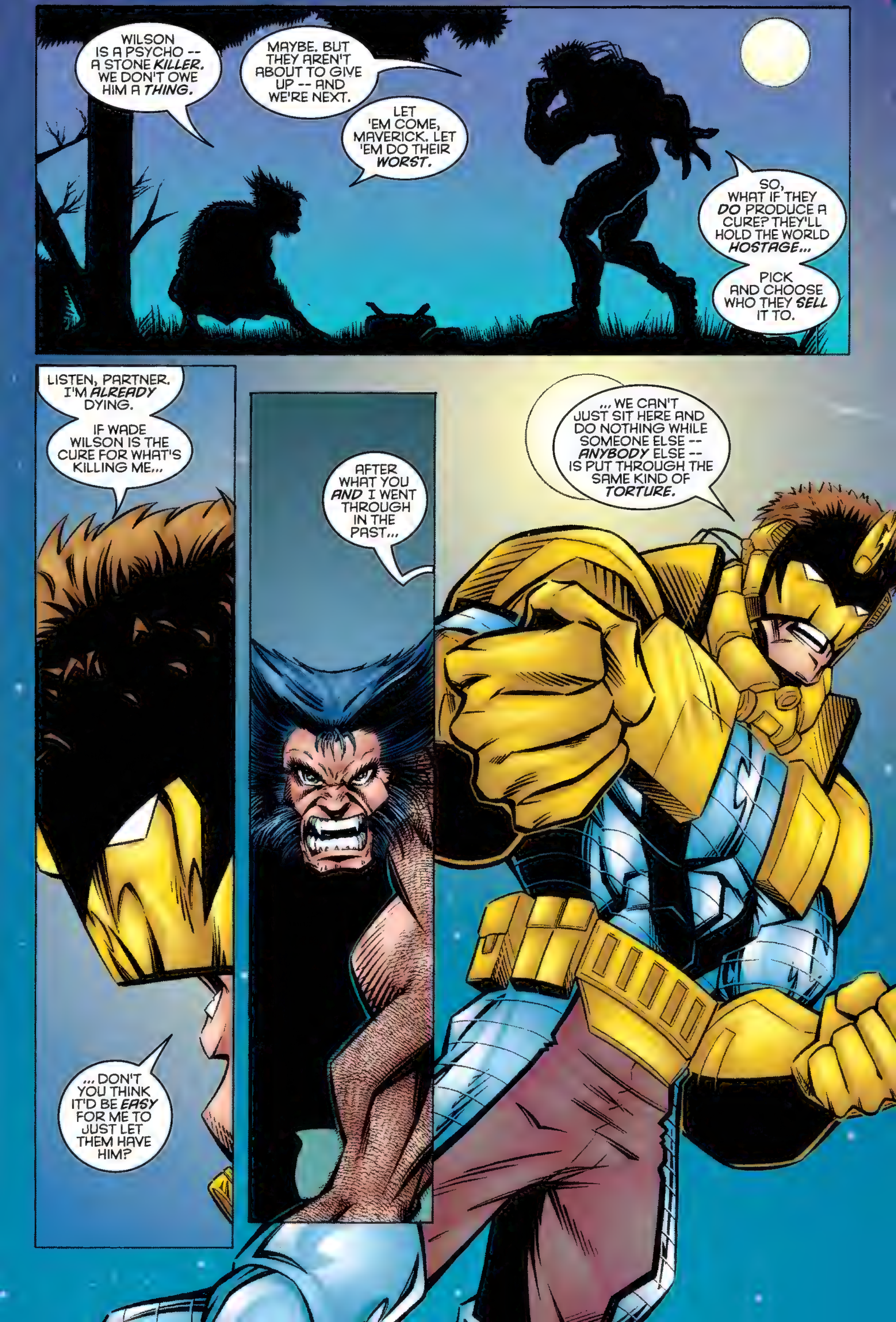

"... 42 HOURS... ABOUT *TIME* YOU CAME AROUND.
"... BEGINNING TO DOUBT MY OWN *PROGNOSIS...*
"... HEALED REMARKABLY... THOUGH *LEGACY VIRUS...*
"... HAS *ERODED... HEALING FACTOR* YOU RECEIVED DURING THE WEAPON X PROGRAM.
"I'M AFRAID WOLVERINE IS NOT FAIRING WELL, EITHER.
"WITHOUT THE ADAMANTIUM, HE'S MUTATING... ALMOST *FERAL,* NOW."
ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, THERE'S MOCHA ICE CREAM IN THE FREEZER.
MY *FACEPLATE! I NEED* MY *FACEPLATE!*
I ASSURE YOU, MISTER NORTH, I'M *QUITE* FAMILIAR WITH THE TERRIBLE *RAVAGES* OF THE LEGACY VIRUS.
YOU'VE NOTHING TO *HIDE* HERE. YOU'RE AMONG *FRIENDS.*
WHERE CAN I FIND LOGAN?
HE SPENDS ALL HIS TIME OUTSIDE THESE DAYS.. *PROWLING* THE GROUNDS.
BUT YOU'RE IN *NO CONDITION* TO...
THANK YOU DOCTOR McCOY.
FOR *EVERYTHING.*

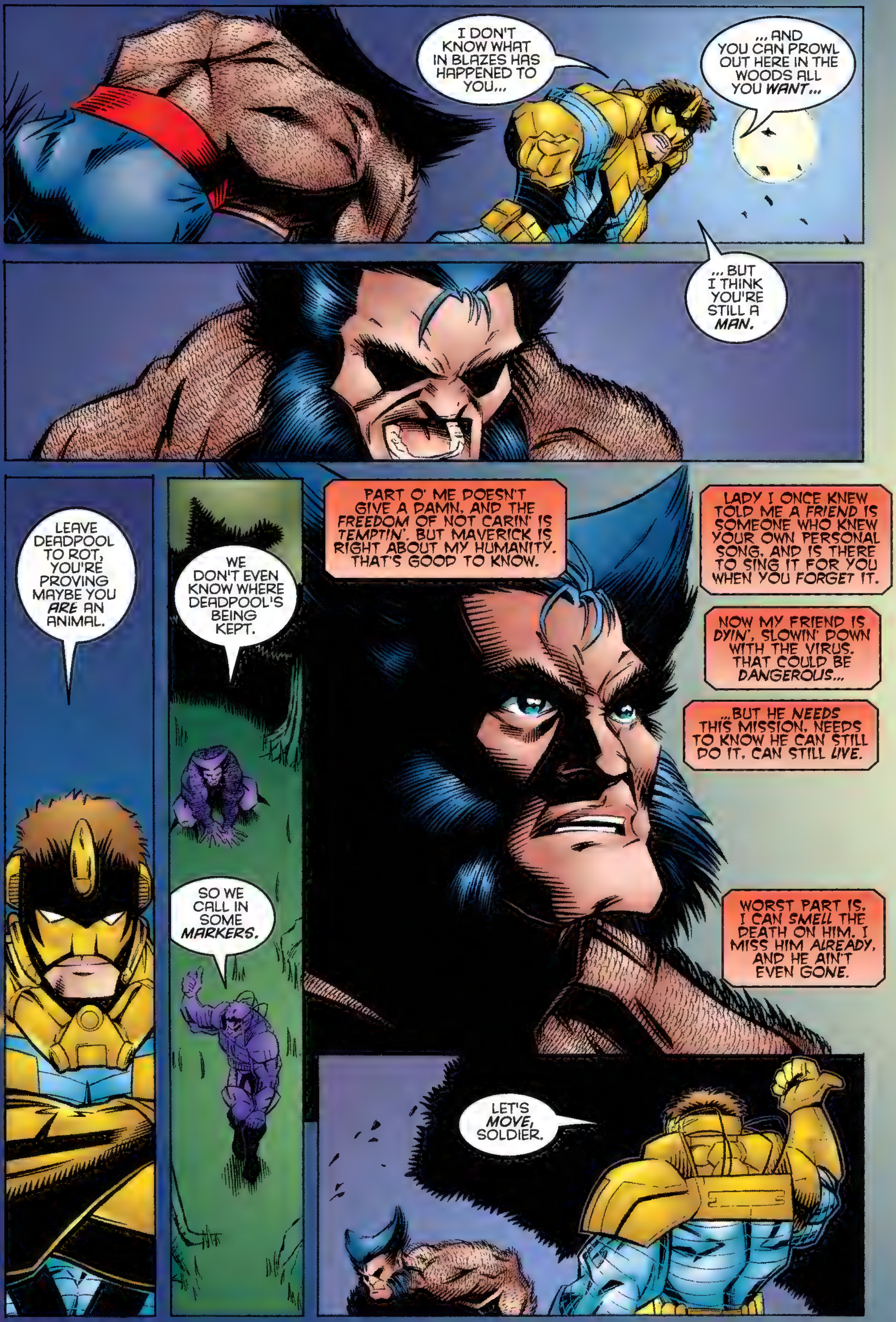

BREEZE AND BIRDSONG MASK THE UNDERCURRENT OF CHAOS WHICH THREATENS THE X-MEN'S VERY EXISTENCE.
MAVERICK HAS KNOWN WOLVERINE A LONG TIME.
SINCE BEFORE THE X-MEN WERE A TWINKLE IN CHARLES XAVIER'S EYE.
AND HE KNOWS THE BEST WAY TO FIND WOLVERINE...
...IS TO LET WOLVERINE FIND HIM.
LAST TIME I SAW YOU, YOU WERE LOOKIN' FOR SOMEONE TO PUNCH YOUR TICKET. MY ANSWER'S STILL NO.
YOU THINK I NEARLY DIED GETTING HERE JUST SO YOU COULD FINISH ME OFF?
GUESS NOT. MAYBE YOU BETTER TELL ME WHY YOU ARE HERE. I'M RUNNIN' A LITTLE SHORT ON PATIENCE THESE DAYS.
LOGAN'S KEEPING HIS DISTANCE. MAVERICK HAS TO WONDER IF HE'S AFRAID OF HIS OWN, SAVAGE SELF, OR OF CATCHING THE LEGACY VIRUS.
HE SHOULD KNOW BETTER. LOGAN'S A FRIEND. BUT KNOWING YOU'RE GOING TO DIE... THAT DOES STRANGE THINGS TO A MAN'S PSYCHE.
I CAME HERE TO WARN YOU, LOGAN.
I WAS AT MY MANHATTAN SAFEHOUSE WHEN THEY CAME FOR ME.
EVEN AT MY BEST, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN TOO MANY OF THEM.
IT WAS TIME TO GO.

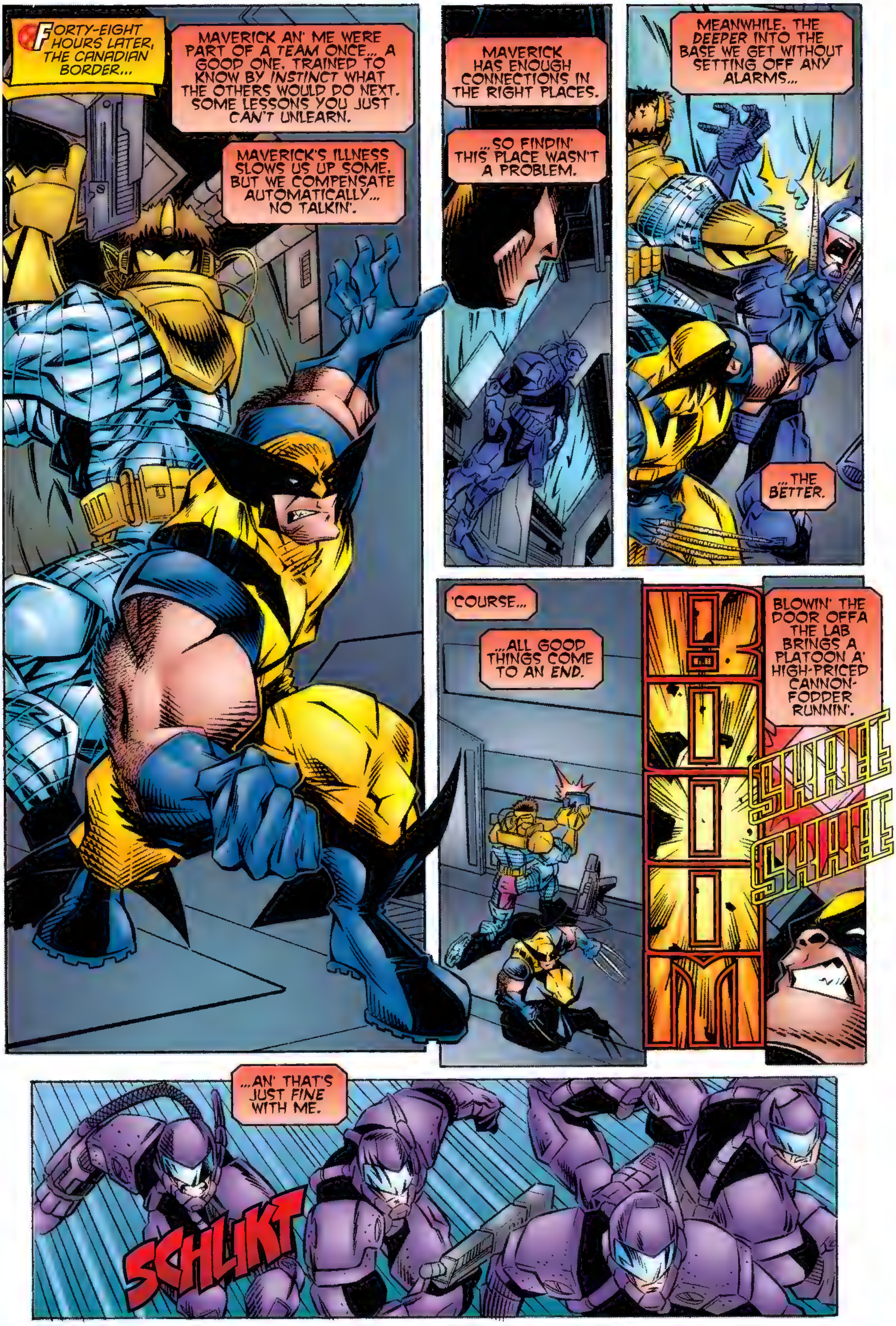

"THEIR FIELD LEADER GOT ME GOOD, TORE RIGHT THROUGH MY ARMOR...
SHAKT
"... BEFORE THE DOORS TO THE SPEED LIFT SHUT ON HIS ARM.
"I HIT THE ROOF FOR DUSTOFF."
WHEN THEY FIRST HIT ME, ONE OF THEM SAID I WAS THE PERFECT GUINEA PIG.
A MUTANT WITH A HEALING FACTOR TAKEN FROM YOUR DNA TEMPLATE, THEN INFECTED WITH THE LEGACY VIRUS.
THEY ALREADY HAVE DEADPOOL. IT FOLLOWS THAT YOU ARE NEXT ON THE LIST, LOGAN.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY'VE GOT THE MOUTHY LITTLE MERC, BUT WHEREVER HE IS, I'M WILLING TO BET HE'S IN PAIN.

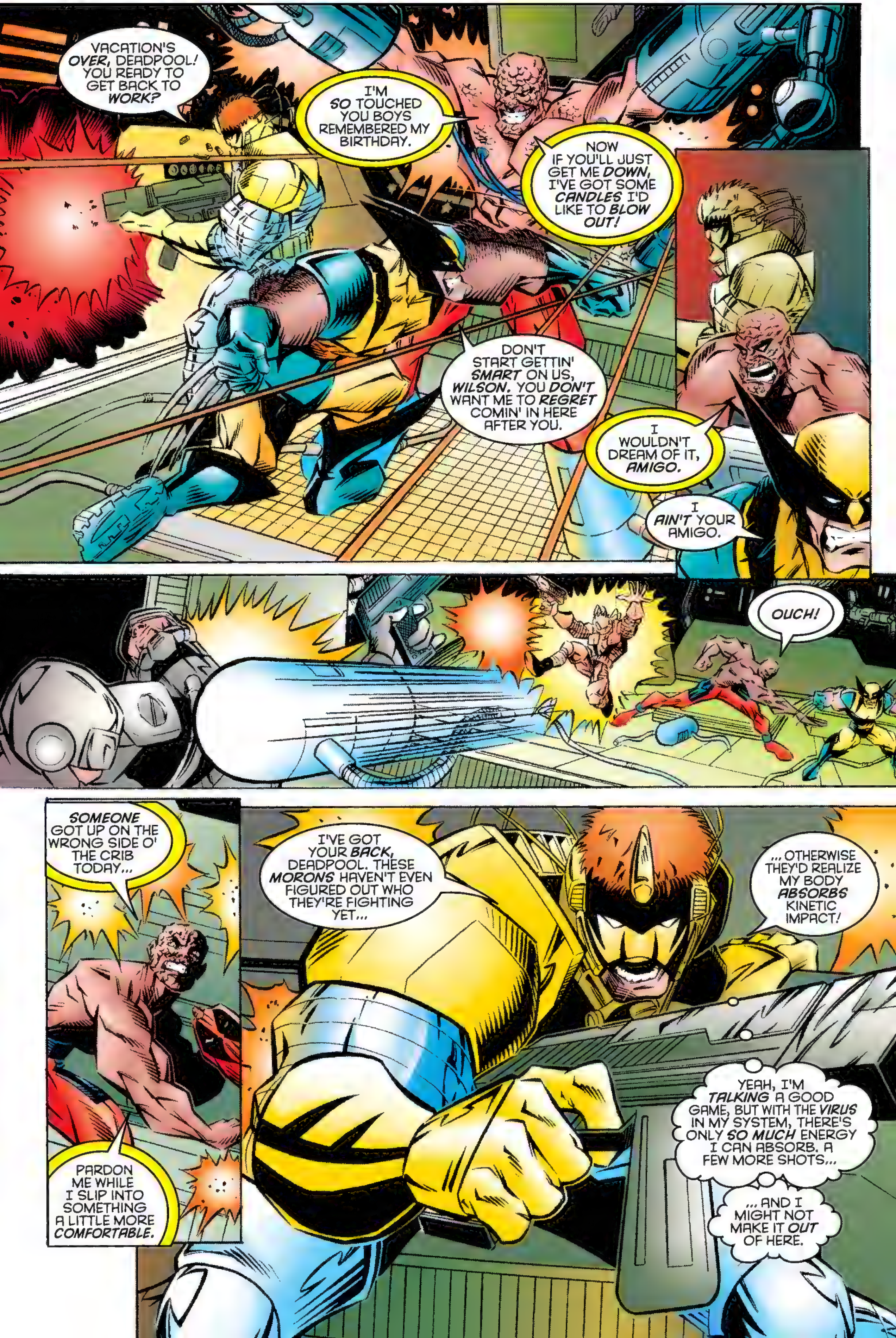

THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN BORDER...
HAVE YOU ACTUALLY *FOUND* THE *CURE*, DOCTOR WESTERGAARD?
WE *BELIEVE* WE ARE CLOSE, MISTER TUCCI. *VERY* CLOSE.
AND WHOEVER HAS THE *CURE*...
...HAS *POWER*.
SALVATION TO THE *HIGHEST BIDDER*, eh?
WE ARE *INFORMATION BROKERS*, MISTER TUCCI.
COMPASSION IS BAD FOR *BUSINESS*.
WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF *ACQUIRING* SEVERAL TEST SUBJECTS...
...THE STUDY OF WHICH WE FEEL WILL HELP US ACHIEVE OUR GOAL.
WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN *TESTING* SUBJECT "A"...

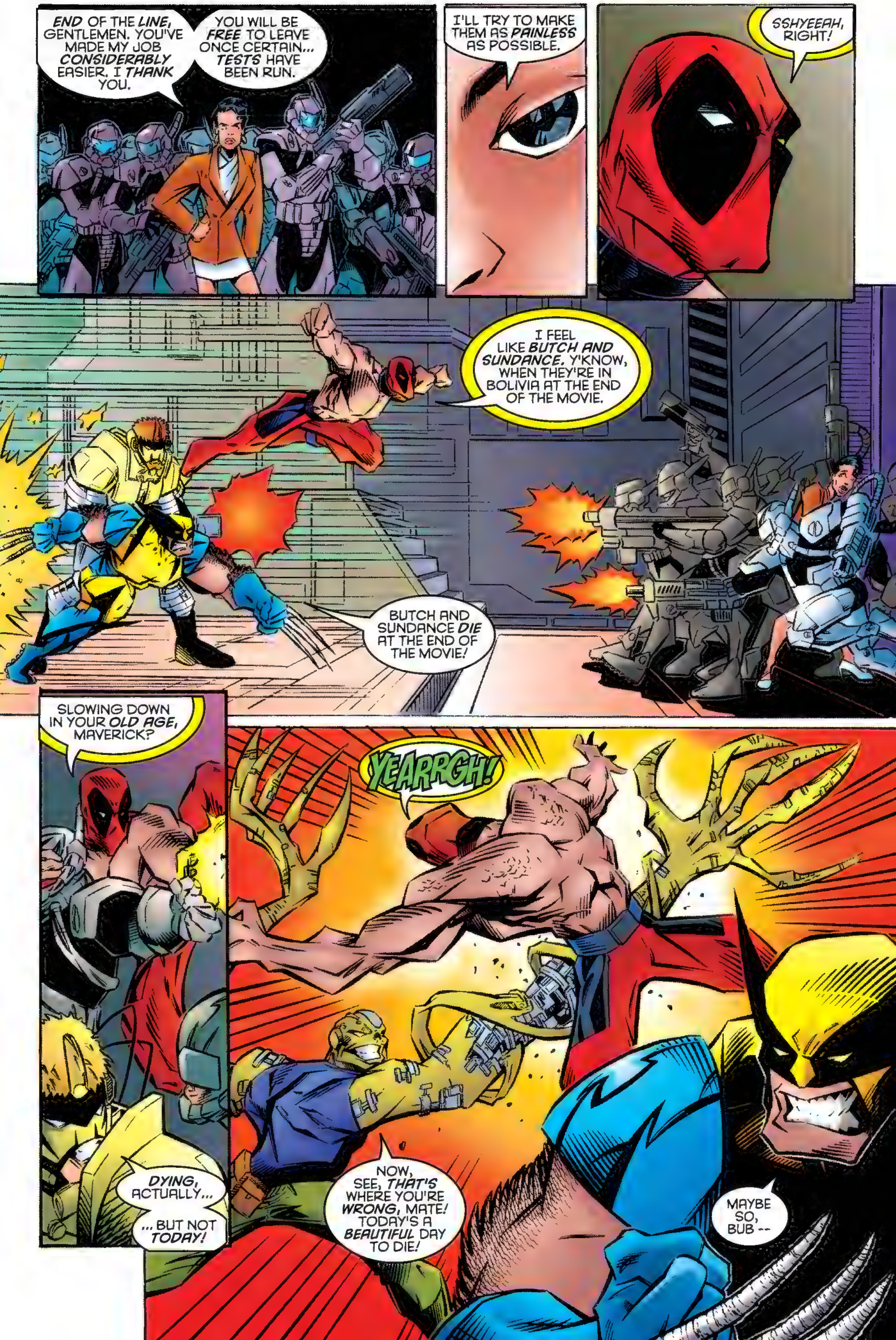

YOU POOR, UNLUCKY *SOD*. YOU'VE WENT AND LOST...
... AGAIN.
AW, C'MON TERRATERTON, OLD PAL...
... I'M JUST GETTING WARMED *UP*.
WHAT SAY WE PLAY BEST THREE OUTTA FIVE?
HEY! CHECK IT OUT -- IT'S THE CAST OF *"ER"!*
SLAYBACK! WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING *ON* HERE?
JUST A FRIENDLY LITTLE *GAME.*
GET *OUT*, SLAYBACK. DOCTOR CHADWICK, BEGIN THE MARROW WITHDRAWAL *IMMEDIATELY.*
YEAH, BY ALL MEANS, DO SOME MORE *"TESTS."*
IF THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW, IT'S *PAIN.*
BEEN LIVIN' WITH IT A *LONG* TIME.
JUST REMEMBER...
... I *GIVE* AS GOOD AS I *GET.*


WILSON IS A PSYCHO -- A STONE *KILLER.* WE DON'T OWE HIM A *THING.*
MAYBE. BUT THEY AREN'T ABOUT TO GIVE UP -- AND WE'RE NEXT.
LET 'EM COME, MAVERICK. LET 'EM DO THEIR *WORST.*
SO, WHAT IF THEY *DO* PRODUCE A CURE? THEY'LL HOLD THE WORLD *HOSTAGE...*
PICK AND CHOOSE WHO THEY *SELL* IT TO.
LISTEN, PARTNER. I'M *ALREADY* DYING.
IF WADE WILSON IS THE CURE FOR WHAT'S KILLING ME...
...DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE *EASY* FOR ME TO JUST LET THEM HAVE HIM?
AFTER WHAT YOU *AND* I WENT THROUGH IN THE PAST...
...WE CAN'T JUST SIT HERE AND DO NOTHING WHILE SOMEONE ELSE -- *ANYBODY* ELSE -- IS PUT THROUGH THE SAME KIND OF *TORTURE.*

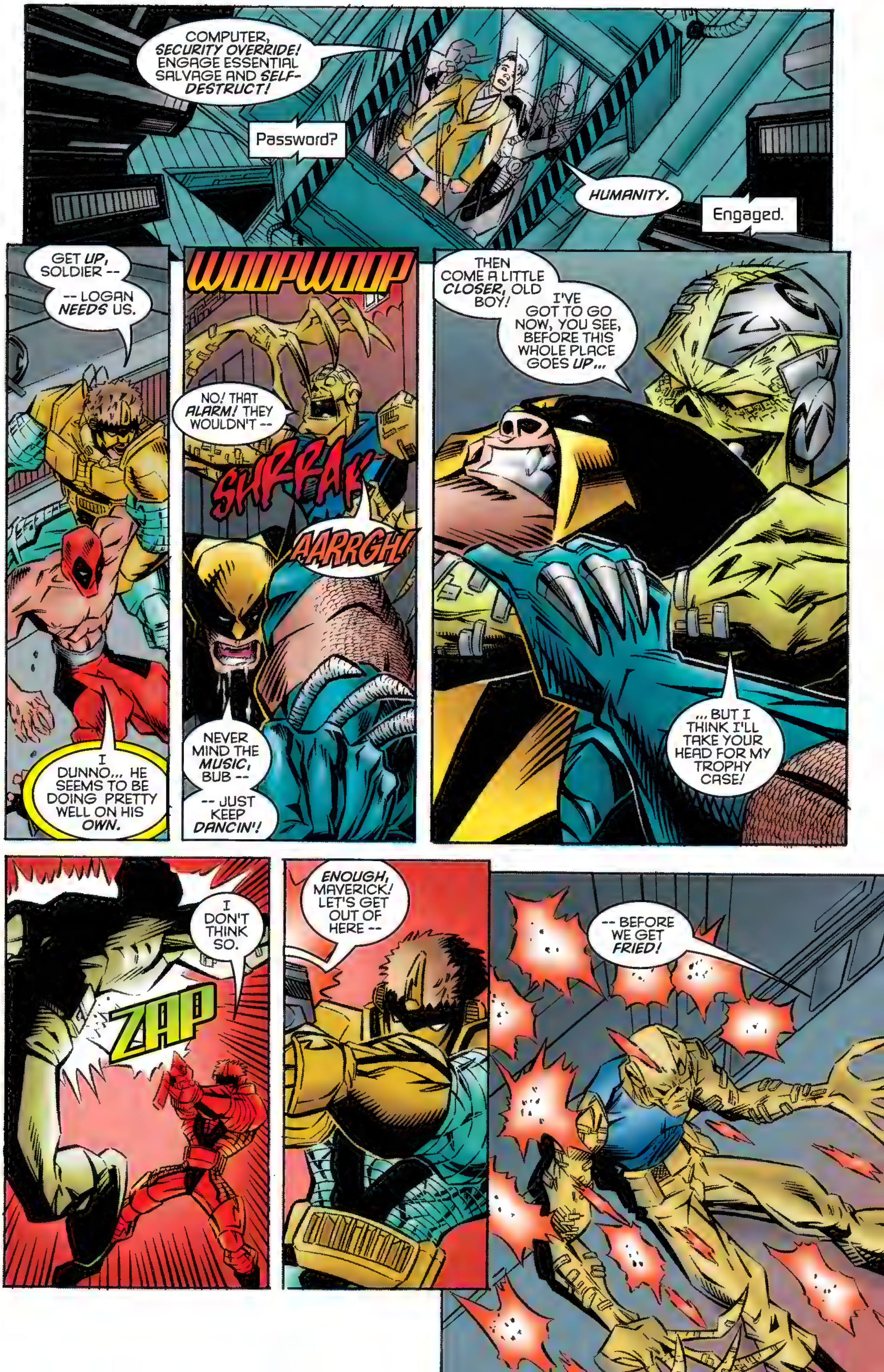

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IN BLAZES HAS HAPPENED TO YOU...
...AND YOU CAN PROWL OUT HERE IN THE WOODS ALL YOU *WANT*...
...BUT I THINK YOU'RE STILL A *MAN.*
LEAVE DEADPOOL TO ROT, YOU'RE PROVING MAYBE YOU *ARE* AN ANIMAL.
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE DEADPOOL'S BEING KEPT.
SO WE CALL IN SOME *MARKERS.*
PART O' ME DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN, AND THE *FREEDOM* OF NOT CARIN' IS *TEMPTIN'.* BUT MAVERICK IS RIGHT ABOUT MY HUMANITY. THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW.
LADY I ONCE KNEW TOLD ME A *FRIEND* IS SOMEONE WHO KNEW YOUR OWN PERSONAL SONG, AND IS THERE TO SING IT FOR YOU WHEN YOU *FORGET* IT.
NOW MY FRIEND IS *DYIN',* SLOWIN' DOWN WITH THE VIRUS. THAT COULD BE *DANGEROUS...*
...BUT HE *NEEDS* THIS MISSION. NEEDS TO KNOW HE CAN STILL DO IT. CAN STILL *LIVE.*
WORST PART IS, I CAN *SMELL* THE DEATH ON HIM. I MISS HIM *ALREADY,* AND HE AIN'T EVEN GONE.
LET'S *MOVE,* SOLDIER.

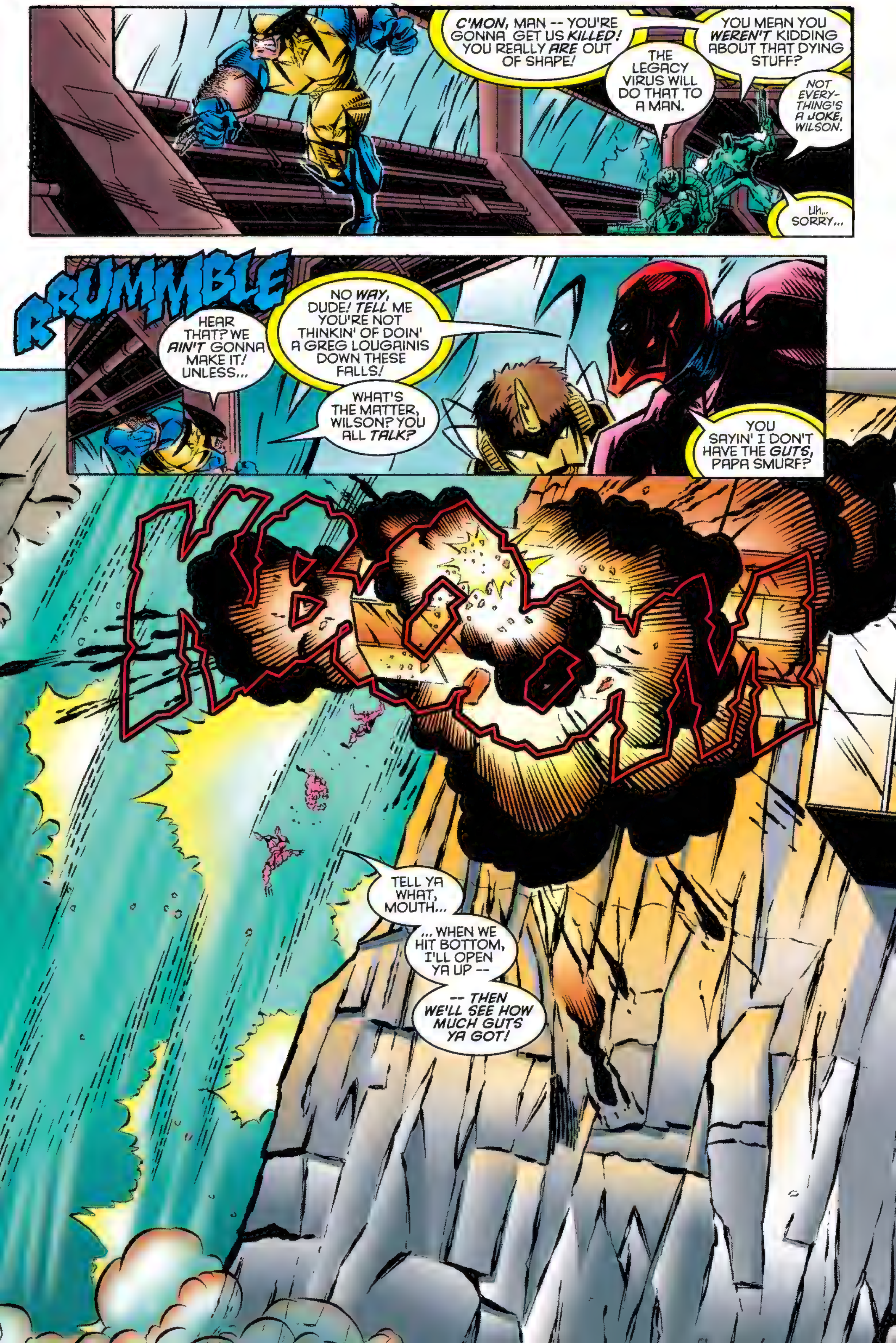

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS LATER, THE CANADIAN BORDER...
MAVERICK AN' ME WERE PART OF A TEAM ONCE... A GOOD ONE, TRAINED TO KNOW BY INSTINCT WHAT THE OTHERS WOULD DO NEXT. SOME LESSONS YOU JUST CAN'T UNLEARN.
MAVERICK'S ILLNESS SLOWS US UP SOME, BUT WE COMPENSATE AUTOMATICALLY... NO TALKIN'.
MAVERICK HAS ENOUGH CONNECTIONS IN THE RIGHT PLACES,
...SO FINDIN' THIS PLACE WASN'T A PROBLEM.
MEANWHILE, THE DEEPER INTO THE BASE WE GET WITHOUT SETTING OFF ANY ALARMS...
...THE BETTER.
'COURSE...
...ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END.
BOOOM
BLOWIN' THE DOOR OFFA THE LAB BRINGS A PLATOON A' HIGH-PRICED CANNON-FODDER RUNNIN'.
SKRAE
SKRAE
...AN' THAT'S JUST FINE WITH ME.
SCHLIKT

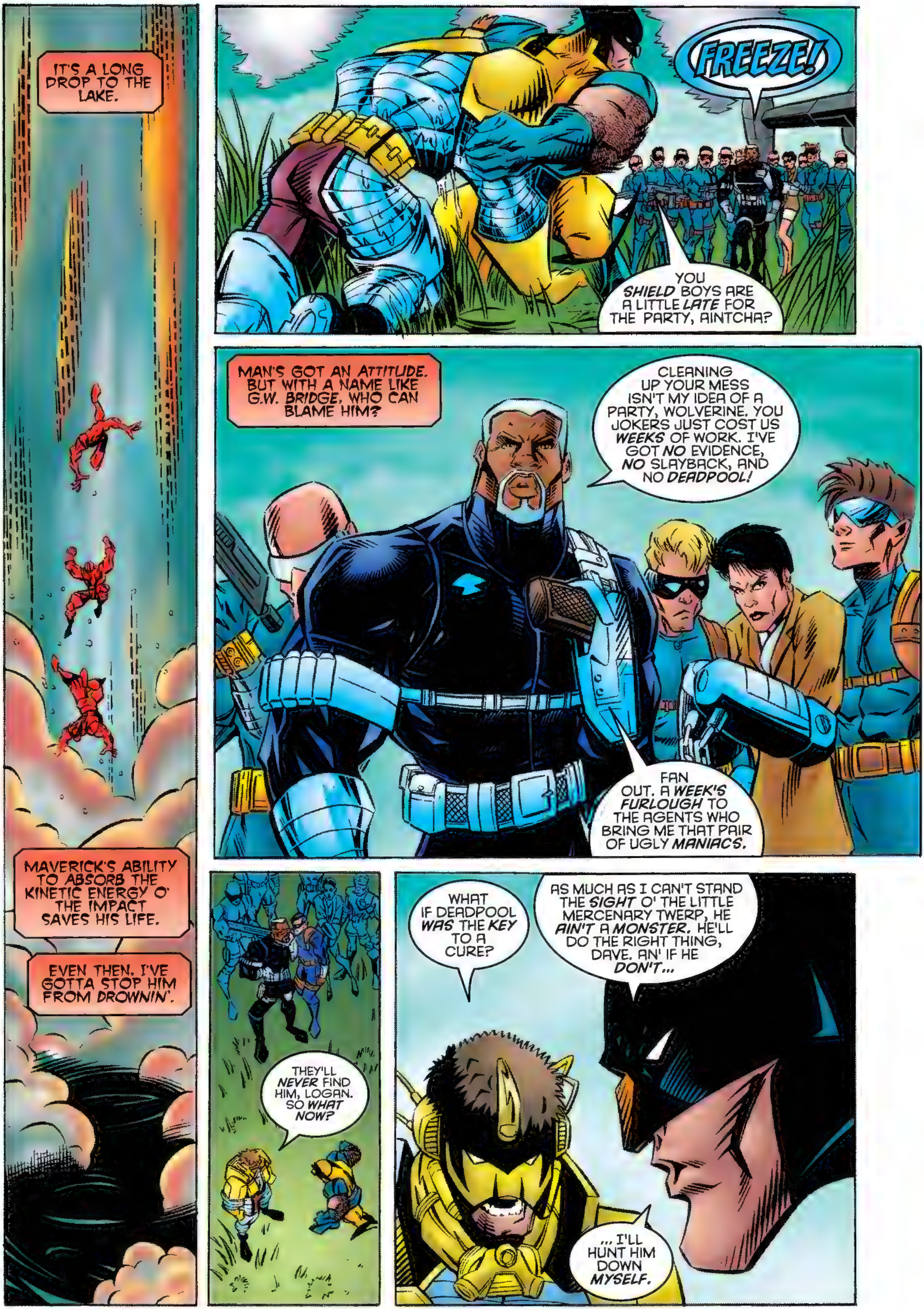

VACATION'S OVER, DEADPOOL! YOU READY TO GET BACK TO WORK?
I'M SO TOUCHED YOU BOYS REMEMBERED MY BIRTHDAY.
NOW IF YOU'LL JUST GET ME DOWN, I'VE GOT SOME CANDLES I'D LIKE TO BLOW OUT!
DON'T START GETTIN' SMART ON US, WILSON. YOU DON'T WANT ME TO REGRET COMIN' IN HERE AFTER YOU.
I WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT, AMIGO.
I AIN'T YOUR AMIGO.
OUCH!
SOMEONE GOT UP ON THE WRONG SIDE O' THE CRIB TODAY...
PARDON ME WHILE I SLIP INTO SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE COMFORTABLE.
I'VE GOT YOUR BACK, DEADPOOL. THESE MORONS HAVEN'T EVEN FIGURED OUT WHO THEY'RE FIGHTING YET...
...OTHERWISE THEY'D REALIZE MY BODY ABSORBS KINETIC IMPACT!
YEAH, I'M TALKING A GOOD GAME, BUT WITH THE VIRUS IN MY SYSTEM, THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH ENERGY I CAN ABSORB. A FEW MORE SHOTS...
...AND I MIGHT NOT MAKE IT OUT OF HERE.

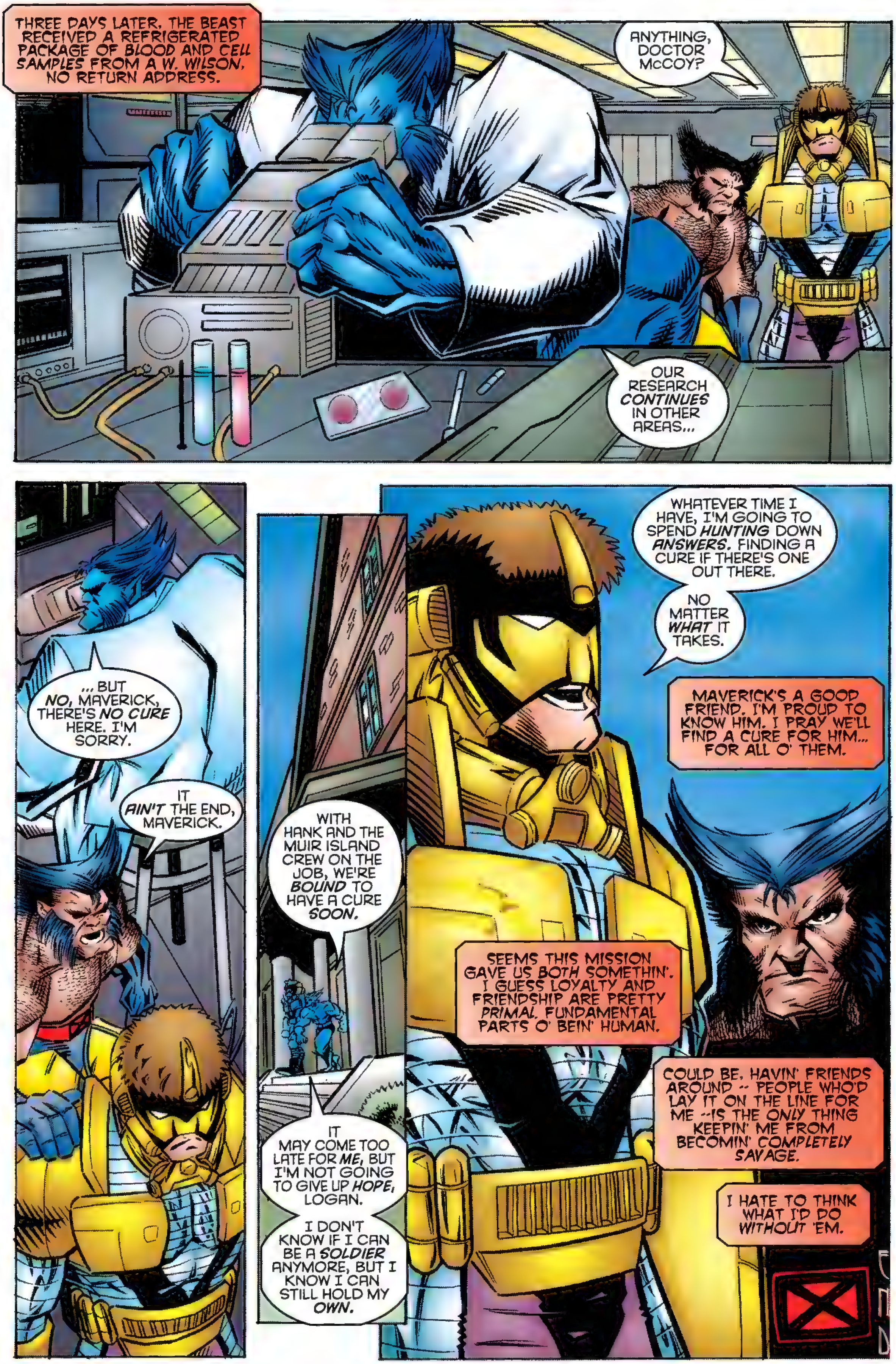

END OF THE LINE, GENTLEMEN. YOU'VE MADE MY JOB CONSIDERABLY EASIER. I THANK YOU.
YOU WILL BE FREE TO LEAVE ONCE CERTAIN... TESTS HAVE BEEN RUN.
I'LL TRY TO MAKE THEM AS PAINLESS AS POSSIBLE.
SSHYEEAH, RIGHT!
I FEEL LIKE BUTCH AND SUNDANCE. Y'KNOW, WHEN THEY'RE IN BOLIVIA AT THE END OF THE MOVIE.
BUTCH AND SUNDANCE DIE AT THE END OF THE MOVIE!
SLOWING DOWN IN YOUR OLD AGE, MAVERICK?
DYING, ACTUALLY...
...BUT NOT TODAY!
YEARRGH!
NOW, SEE, THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, MATE! TODAY'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY TO DIE!
MAYBE SO, BUB --

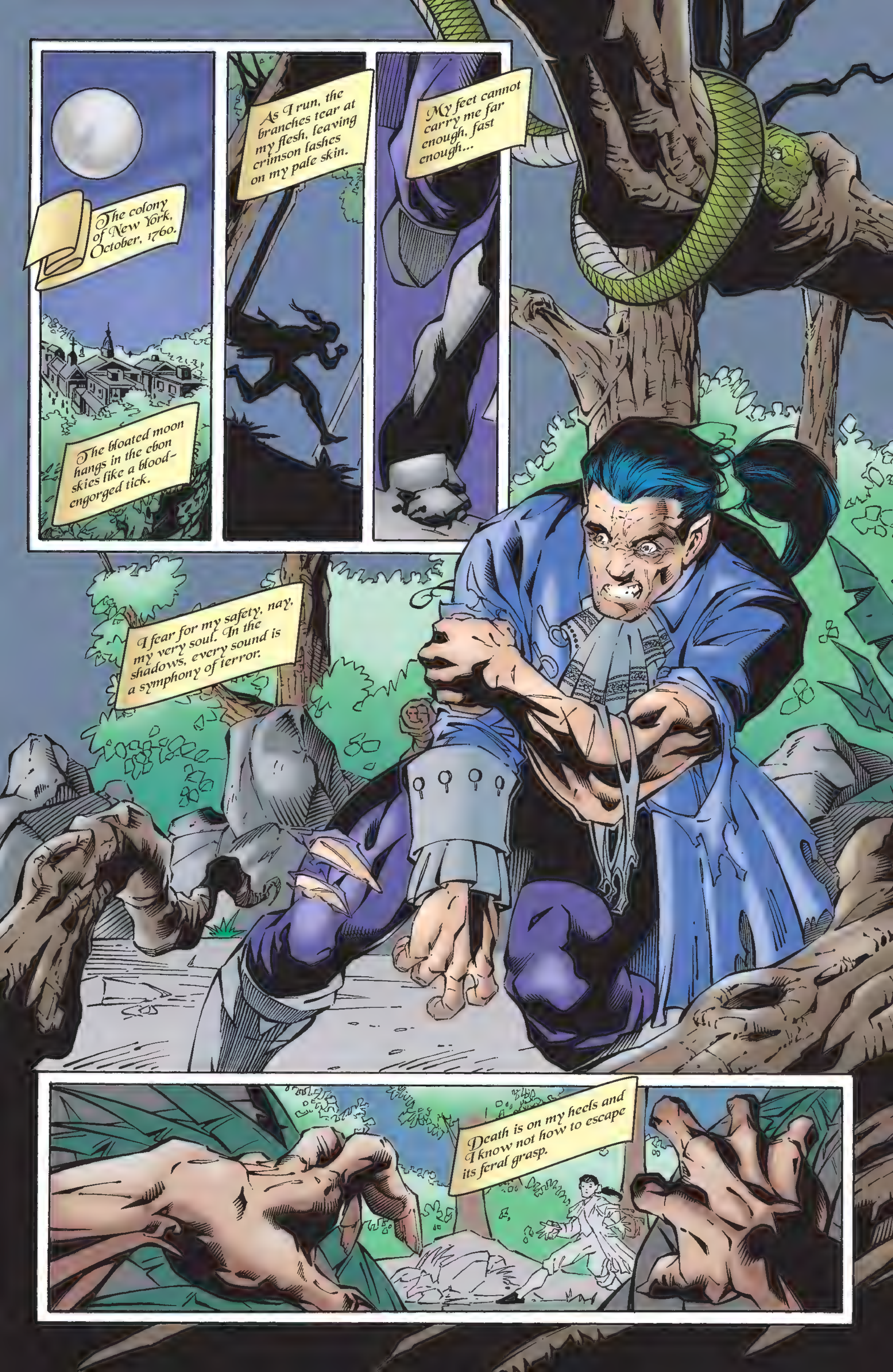
-- BUT WE AIN'T GONNA BE THE ONES DOIN' THE DYIN'!

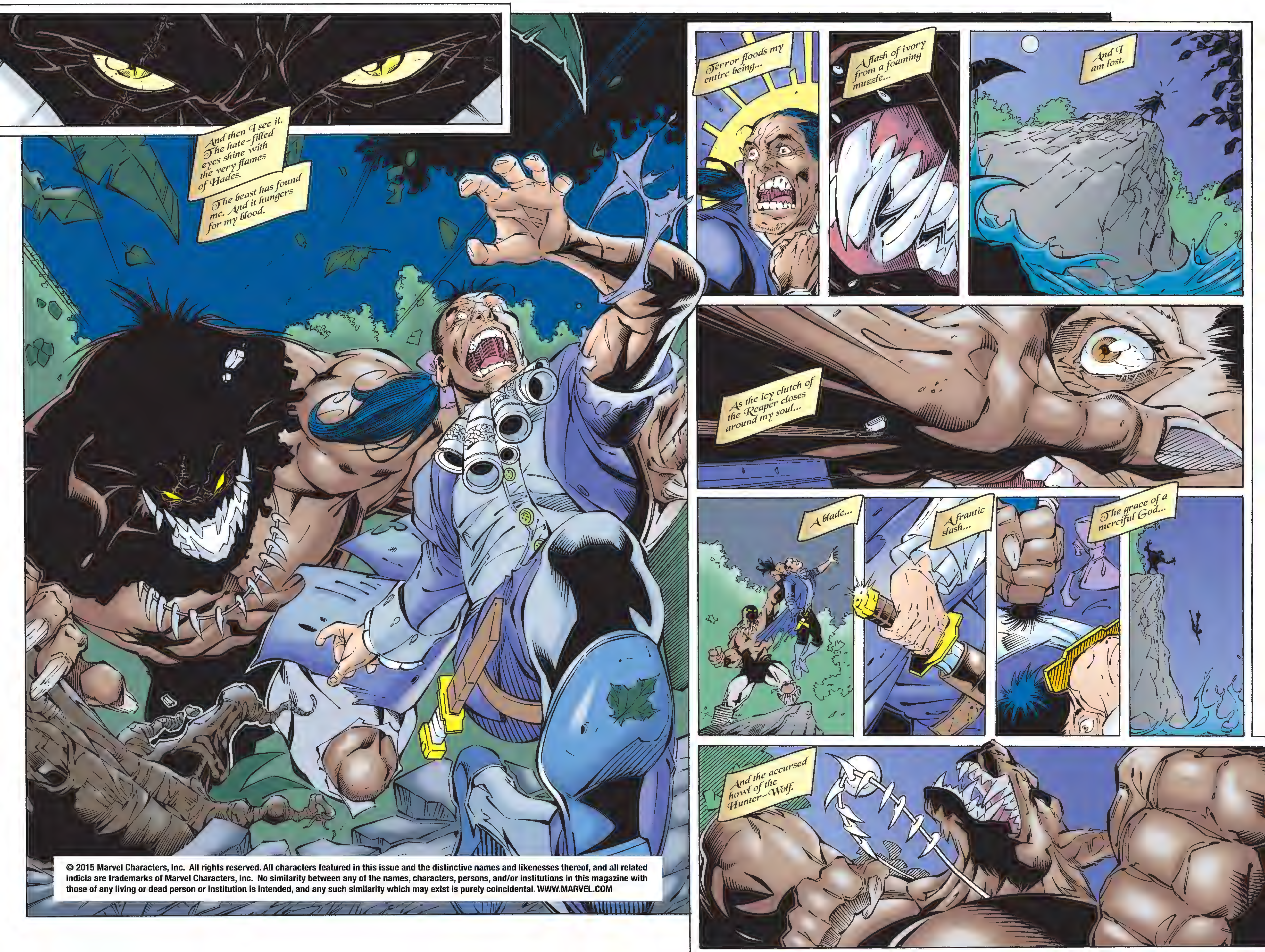

COMPUTER, *SECURITY OVERRIDE!* ENGAGE ESSENTIAL SALVAGE AND *SELF-DESTRUCT!*
Password?
HUMANITY.
Engaged.
GET *UP,* SOLDIER --
-- LOGAN *NEEDS* US.
I DUNNO... HE SEEMS TO BE DOING PRETTY WELL ON HIS *OWN.*
WOOPWOOP
NO! THAT *ALARM!* THEY WOULDN'T --
SHRAK
AARRGH!
NEVER MIND THE *MUSIC,* BUB --
-- JUST KEEP *DANCIN'!*
THEN COME A LITTLE *CLOSER,* OLD BOY!
I'VE GOT TO GO NOW, YOU SEE, BEFORE THIS WHOLE PLACE GOES *UP...*
... BUT I THINK I'LL TAKE YOUR HEAD FOR MY TROPHY CASE!
I DON'T THINK SO.
ZAP
ENOUGH, MAVERICK! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE --
-- BEFORE WE GET *FRIED!*


C'MON, MAN -- YOU'RE GONNA GET US KILLED! YOU REALLY ARE OUT OF SHAPE!
THE LEGACY VIRUS WILL DO THAT TO A MAN.
YOU MEAN YOU WEREN'T KIDDING ABOUT THAT DYING STUFF?
NOT EVERYTHING'S A JOKE, WILSON.
Uh... SORRY...
RRUMMBLE
HEAR THAT? WE AIN'T GONNA MAKE IT! UNLESS...
NO WAY, DUDE! TELL ME YOU'RE NOT THINKIN' OF DOIN' A GREG LOUGAINIS DOWN THESE FALLS!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, WILSON? YOU ALL TALK?
YOU SAYIN' I DON'T HAVE THE GUTS, PAPA SMURF?
KBOOM
TELL YA WHAT, MOUTH...
...WHEN WE HIT BOTTOM, I'LL OPEN YA UP --
-- THEN WE'LL SEE HOW MUCH GUTS YA GOT!


IT'S A LONG DROP TO THE LAKE.
MAVERICK'S ABILITY TO ABSORB THE KINETIC ENERGY O' THE IMPACT SAVES HIS LIFE.
EVEN THEN, I'VE GOTTA STOP HIM FROM DROWNIN'.
FREEZE!
YOU SHIELD BOYS ARE A LITTLE LATE FOR THE PARTY, AINTCHA?
MAN'S GOT AN ATTITUDE. BUT WITH A NAME LIKE G.W. BRIDGE, WHO CAN BLAME HIM?
CLEANING UP YOUR MESS ISN'T MY IDEA OF A PARTY, WOLVERINE. YOU JOKERS JUST COST US WEEKS OF WORK. I'VE GOT NO EVIDENCE, NO SLAYBACK, AND NO DEADPOOL!
FAN OUT. A WEEK'S FURLOUGH TO THE AGENTS WHO BRING ME THAT PAIR OF UGLY MANIACS.
THEY'LL NEVER FIND HIM, LOGAN. SO WHAT NOW?
WHAT IF DEADPOOL WAS THE KEY TO A CURE?
AS MUCH AS I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT O' THE LITTLE MERCENARY TWERP, HE AIN'T A MONSTER. HE'LL DO THE RIGHT THING, DAVE. AN' IF HE DON'T...
...I'LL HUNT HIM DOWN MYSELF.


THREE DAYS LATER, THE BEAST RECEIVED A REFRIGERATED PACKAGE OF BLOOD AND CELL SAMPLES FROM A W. WILSON, NO RETURN ADDRESS.
ANYTHING, DOCTOR McCOY?
OUR RESEARCH CONTINUES IN OTHER AREAS...
...BUT NO, MAVERICK, THERE'S NO CURE HERE. I'M SORRY.
IT AIN'T THE END, MAVERICK.
WITH HANK AND THE MUIR ISLAND CREW ON THE JOB, WE'RE BOUND TO HAVE A CURE SOON.
IT MAY COME TOO LATE FOR ME, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE UP HOPE, LOGAN.
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN BE A SOLDIER ANYMORE, BUT I KNOW I CAN STILL HOLD MY OWN.
WHATEVER TIME I HAVE, I'M GOING TO SPEND HUNTING DOWN ANSWERS. FINDING A CURE IF THERE'S ONE OUT THERE.
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES.
MAVERICK'S A GOOD FRIEND. I'M PROUD TO KNOW HIM. I PRAY WE'LL FIND A CURE FOR HIM... FOR ALL O' THEM.
SEEMS THIS MISSION GAVE US BOTH SOMETHIN'. I GUESS LOYALTY AND FRIENDSHIP ARE PRETTY PRIMAL, FUNDAMENTAL PARTS O' BEIN' HUMAN.
COULD BE, HAVIN' FRIENDS AROUND -- PEOPLE WHO'D LAY IT ON THE LINE FOR ME -- IS THE ONLY THING KEEPIN' ME FROM BECOMIN' COMPLETELY SAVAGE.
I HATE TO THINK WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT 'EM.
END


The colony of New York, October, 1760.
The bloated moon hangs in the ebon skies like a blood-engorged tick.
As I run, the branches tear at my flesh, leaving crimson lashes on my pale skin.
My feet cannot carry me far enough, fast enough...
I fear for my safety, nay, my very soul. In the shadows, every sound is a symphony of terror.
Death is on my heels and I know not how to escape its feral grasp.


And then I see it. The hate-filled eyes shine with the very flames of Hades.
The beast has found me. And it hungers for my blood.
Terror floods my entire being...
A flash of ivory from a foaming muzzle...
And I am lost.
As the icy clutch of the Reaper closes around my soul...
A blade...
A frantic slash...
The grace of a merciful God...
And the accursed howl of the Hunter-Wolf.

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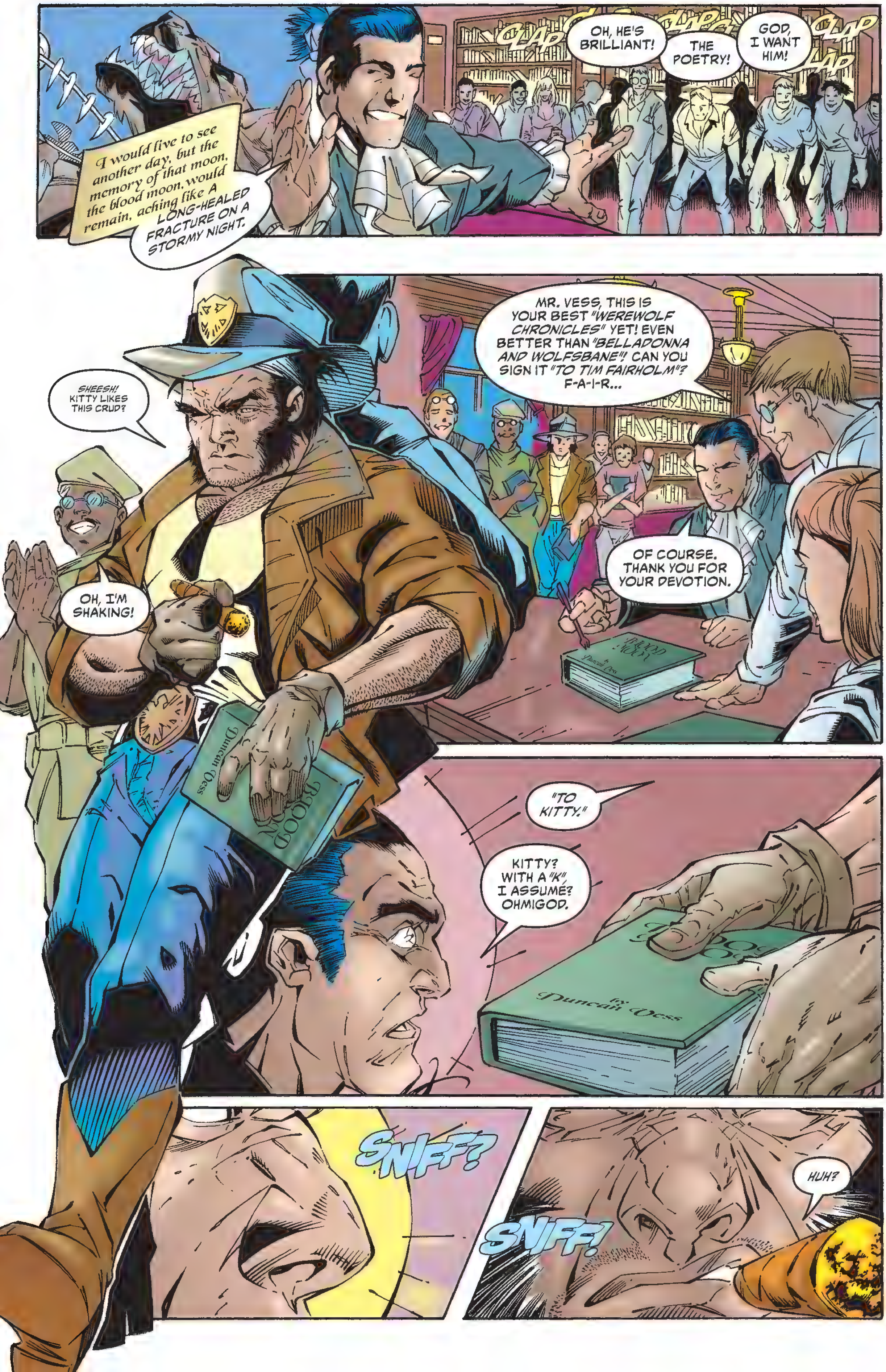
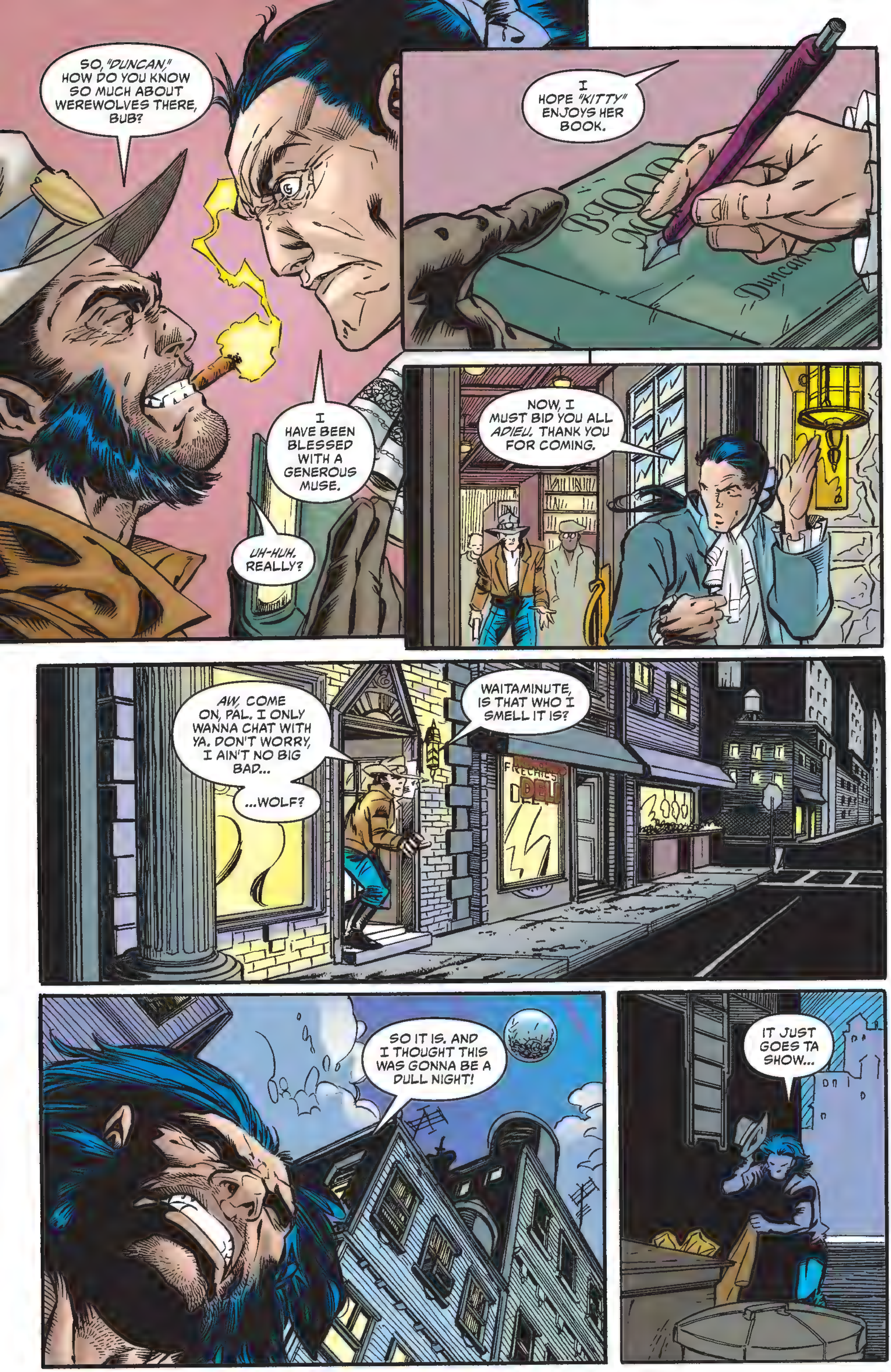
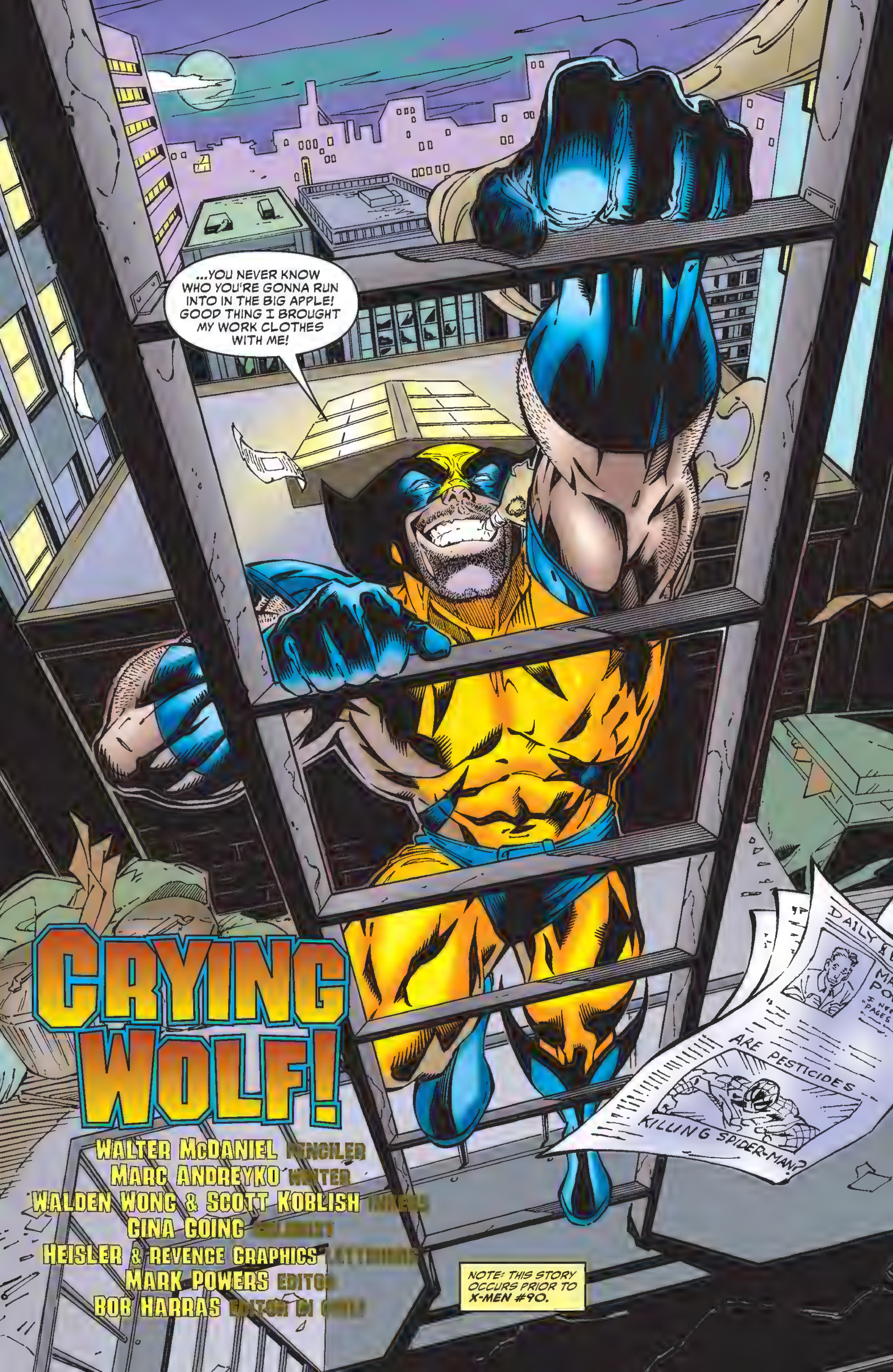
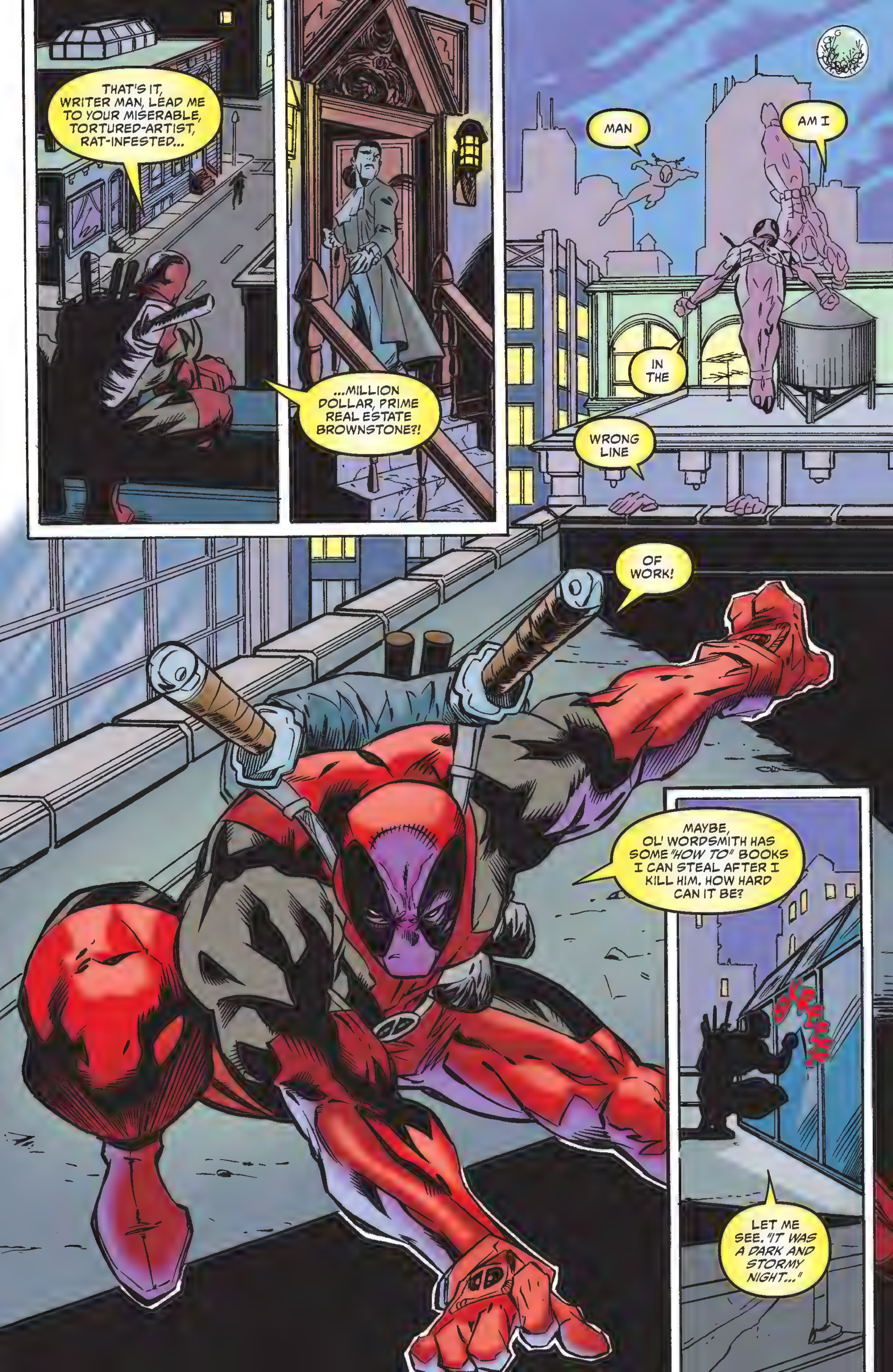
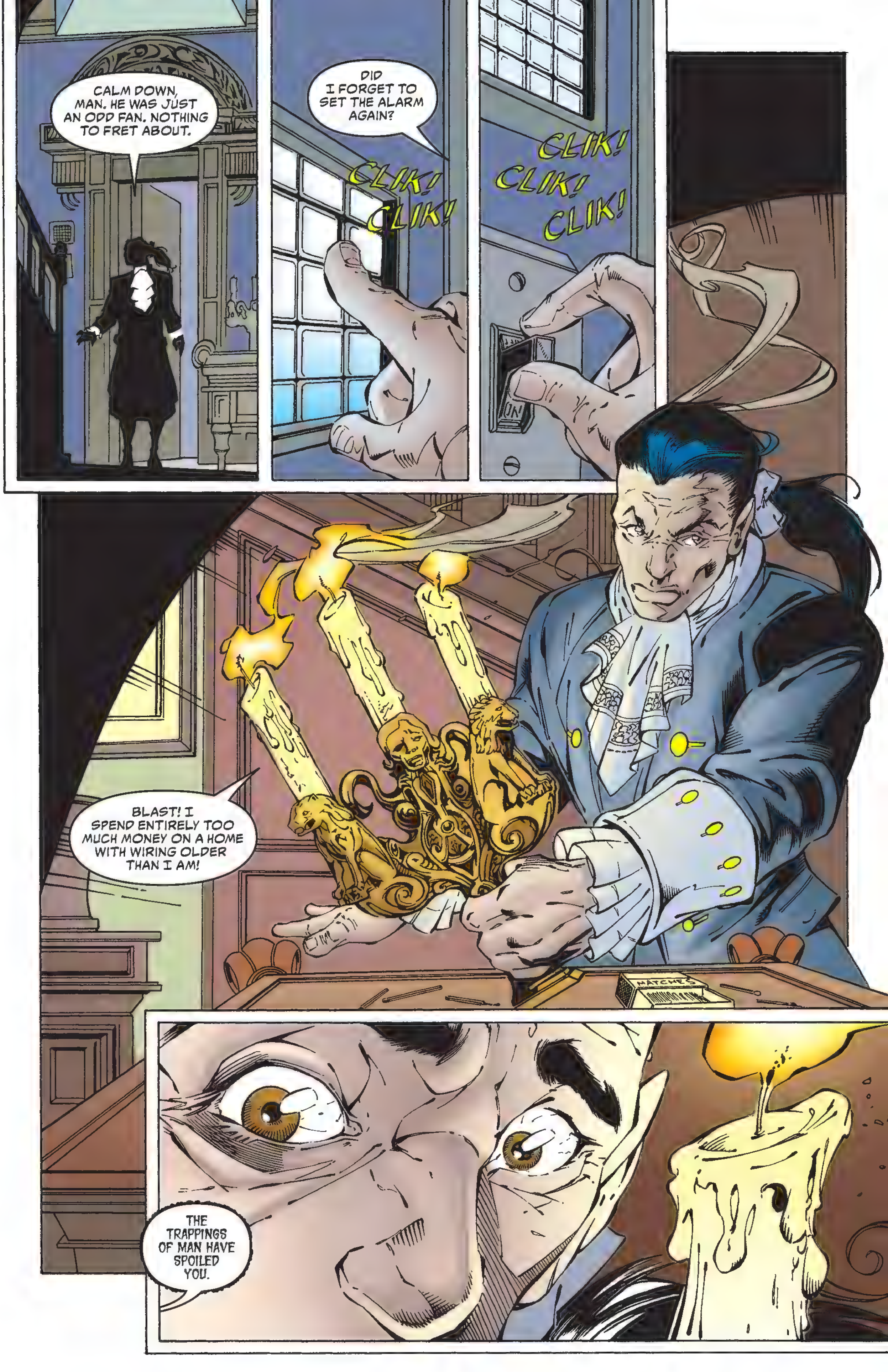
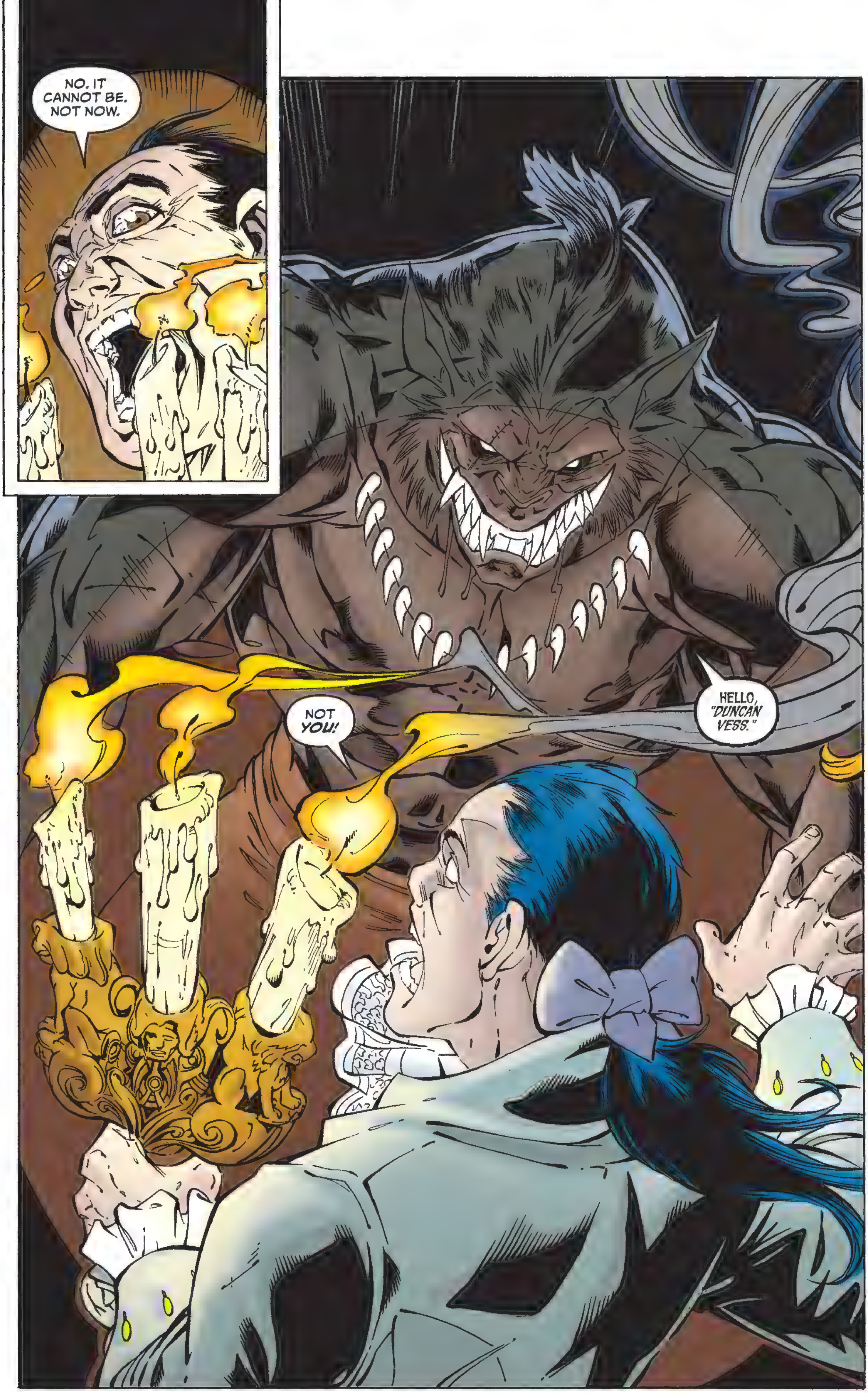

I would live to see another day, but the memory of that moon, the blood moon, would remain, aching like a LONG-HEALED FRACTURE ON A STORMY NIGHT.
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
OH, HE'S BRILLIANT!
THE POETRY!
GOD, I WANT HIM!
SHEESH! KITTY LIKES THIS CRUD?
MR. VESS, THIS IS YOUR BEST "WEREWOLF CHRONICLES" YET! EVEN BETTER THAN "BELLADONNA AND WOLFSBANE"! CAN YOU SIGN IT "TO TIM FAIRHOLM"? F-A-I-R...
OF COURSE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEVOTION.
OH, I'M SHAKING!
BLOOD MOON
Duncan Vess
"TO KITTY."
KITTY? WITH A "K", I ASSUME? OHMIGOD.
BLOOD MOON by Duncan Vess
SNIFF?
SNIFF!
HUH?

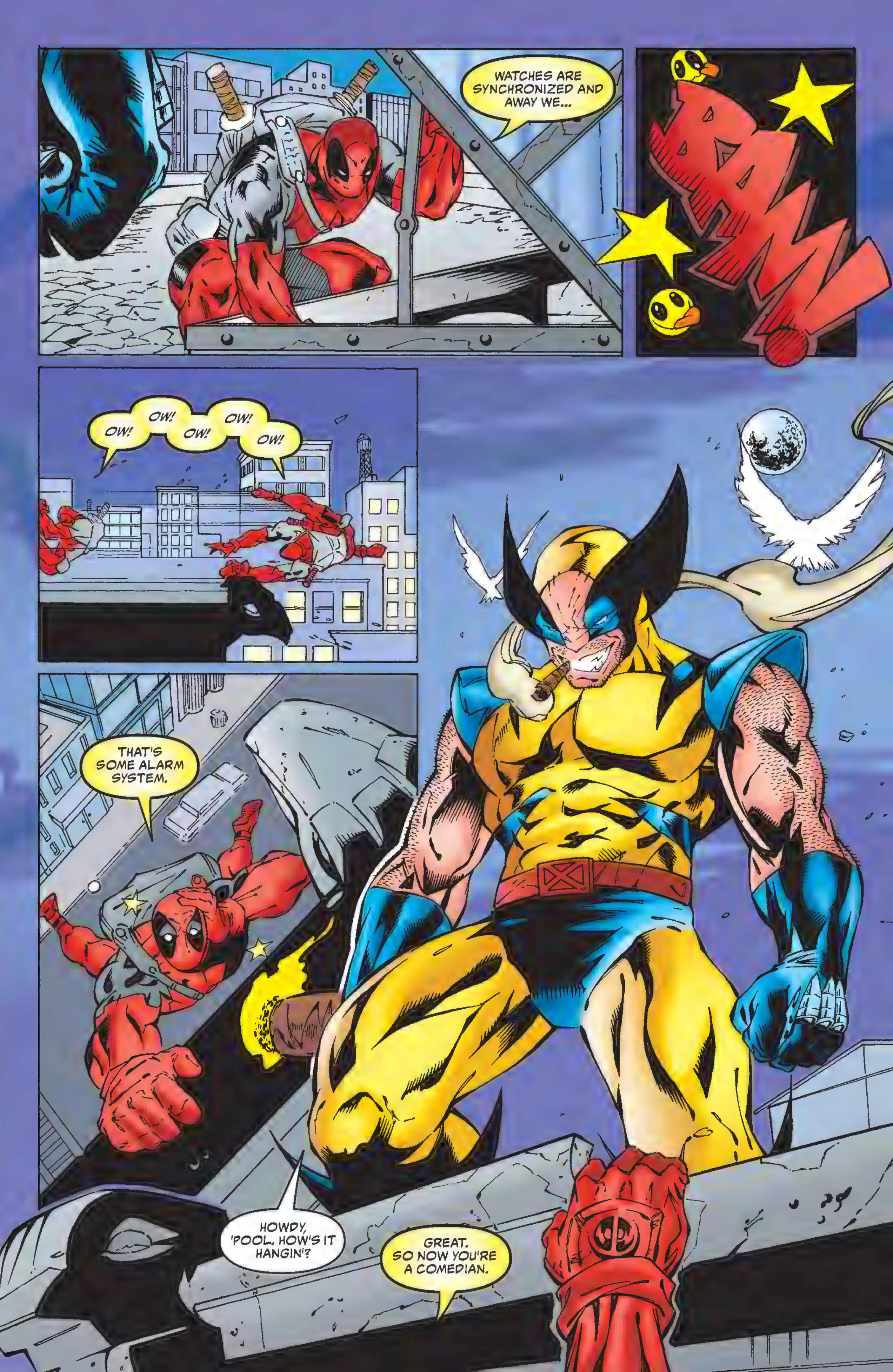

SO, "DUNCAN," HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT WEREWOLVES THERE, BUB?
I HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH A GENEROUS MUSE.
UH-HUH. REALLY?
I HOPE "KITTY" ENJOYS HER BOOK.
Duncan
NOW, I MUST BID YOU ALL ADIEU. THANK YOU FOR COMING.
AW, COME ON, PAL. I ONLY WANNA CHAT WITH YA. DON'T WORRY, I AIN'T NO BIG BAD...
...WOLF?
WAITAMINUTE, IS THAT WHO I SMELL IT IS?
FRESH DELI
SO IT IS. AND I THOUGHT THIS WAS GONNA BE A DULL NIGHT!
IT JUST GOES TA SHOW...

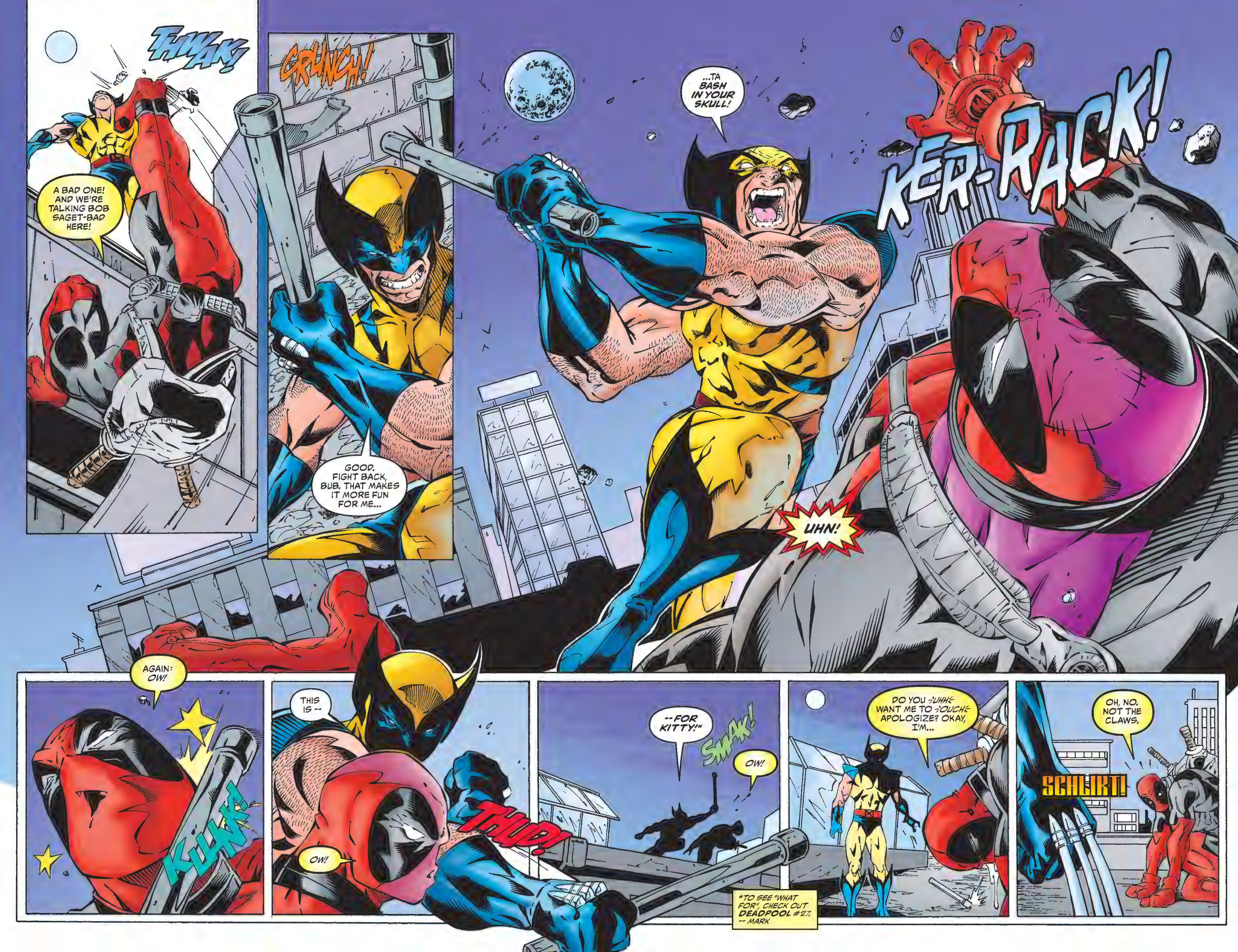

...YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'RE GONNA RUN INTO IN THE BIG APPLE! GOOD THING I BROUGHT MY WORK CLOTHES WITH ME!
CRYING WOLF!
WALTER McDANIEL PENCILER
MARC ANDREYKO WRITER
WALDEN WONG & SCOTT KOBLISH INKERS
GINA GOING COLORIST
HEISLER & REVENGE GRAPHICS LETTERING
MARK POWERS EDITOR
BOB HARRAS EDITOR IN CHIEF
ARE PESTICIDES KILLING SPIDER-MAN?
NOTE: THIS STORY OCCURS PRIOR TO X-MEN #90.

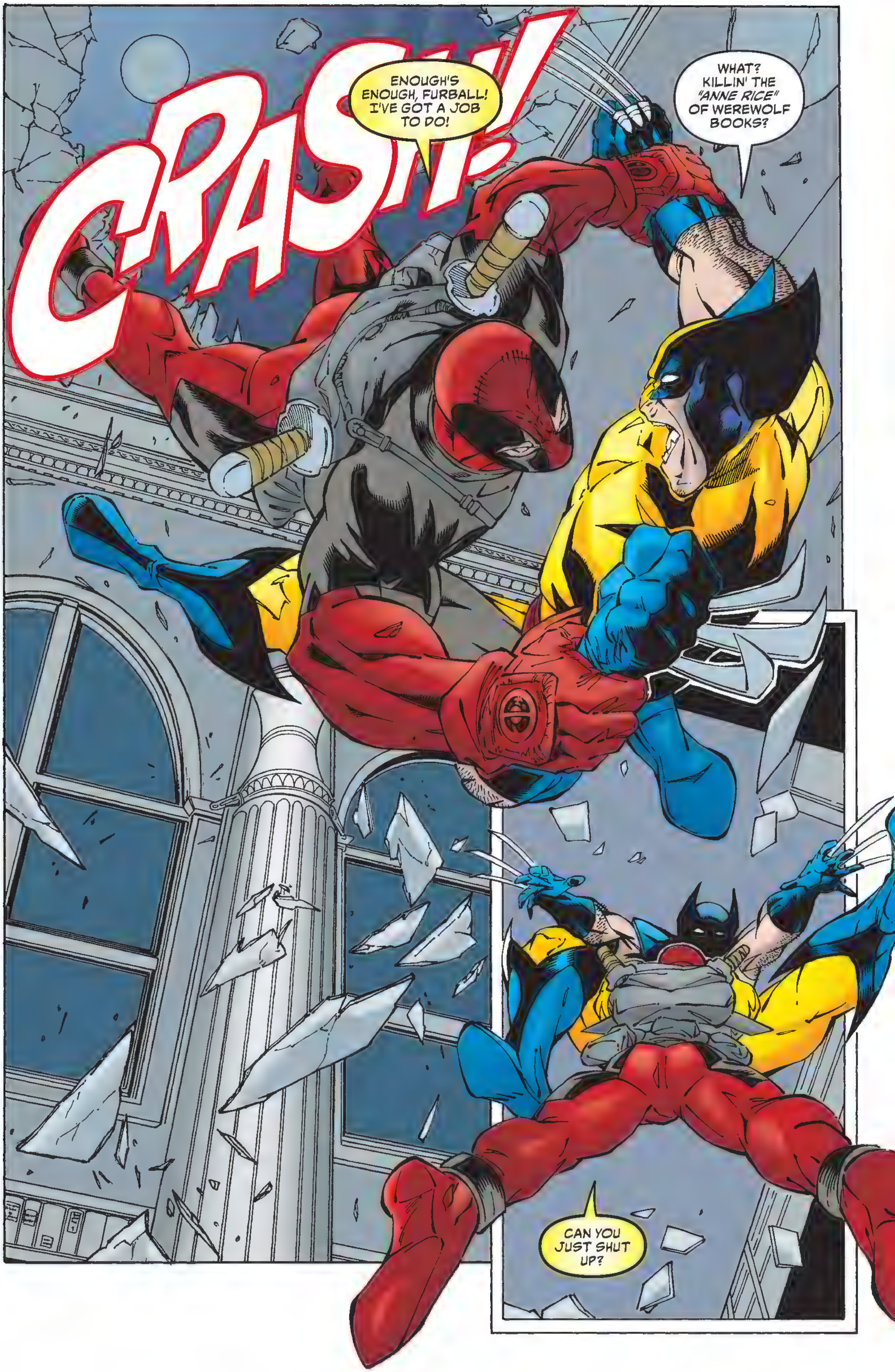

THAT'S IT, WRITER MAN, LEAD ME TO YOUR MISERABLE, TORTURED-ARTIST, RAT-INFESTED...
...MILLION DOLLAR, PRIME REAL ESTATE BROWNSTONE?!
MAN
AM I
IN THE
WRONG LINE
OF WORK!
MAYBE, OL' WORDSMITH HAS SOME "HOW TO" BOOKS I CAN STEAL AFTER I KILL HIM. HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
LET ME SEE. "IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT..."

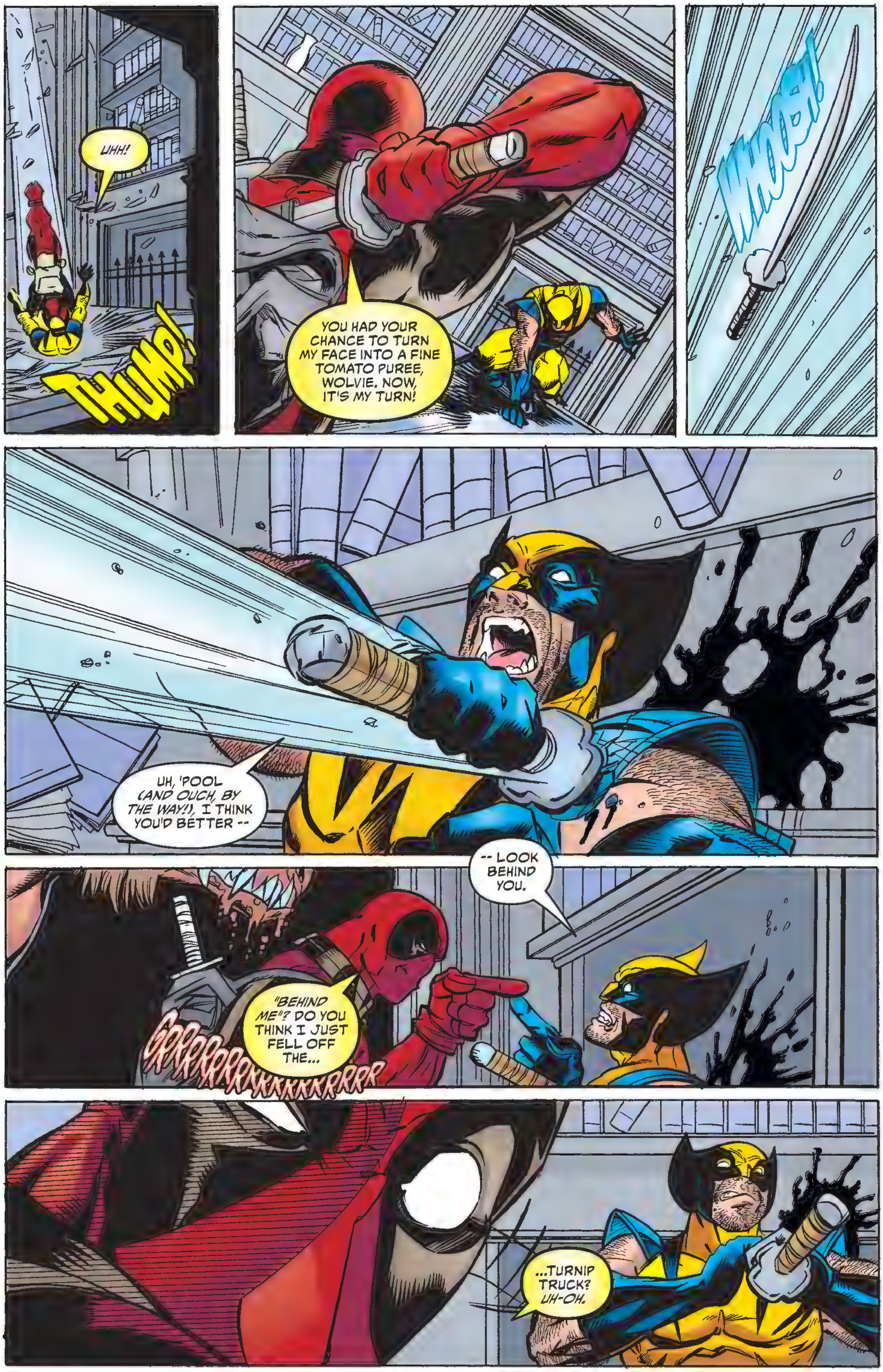

CALM DOWN, MAN. HE WAS JUST AN ODD FAN. NOTHING TO FRET ABOUT.
DID I FORGET TO SET THE ALARM AGAIN?
CLIK! CLIK!
CLIK! CLIK! CLIK!
BLAST! I SPEND ENTIRELY TOO MUCH MONEY ON A HOME WITH WIRING OLDER THAN I AM!
MATCHES
THE TRAPPINGS OF MAN HAVE SPOILED YOU.

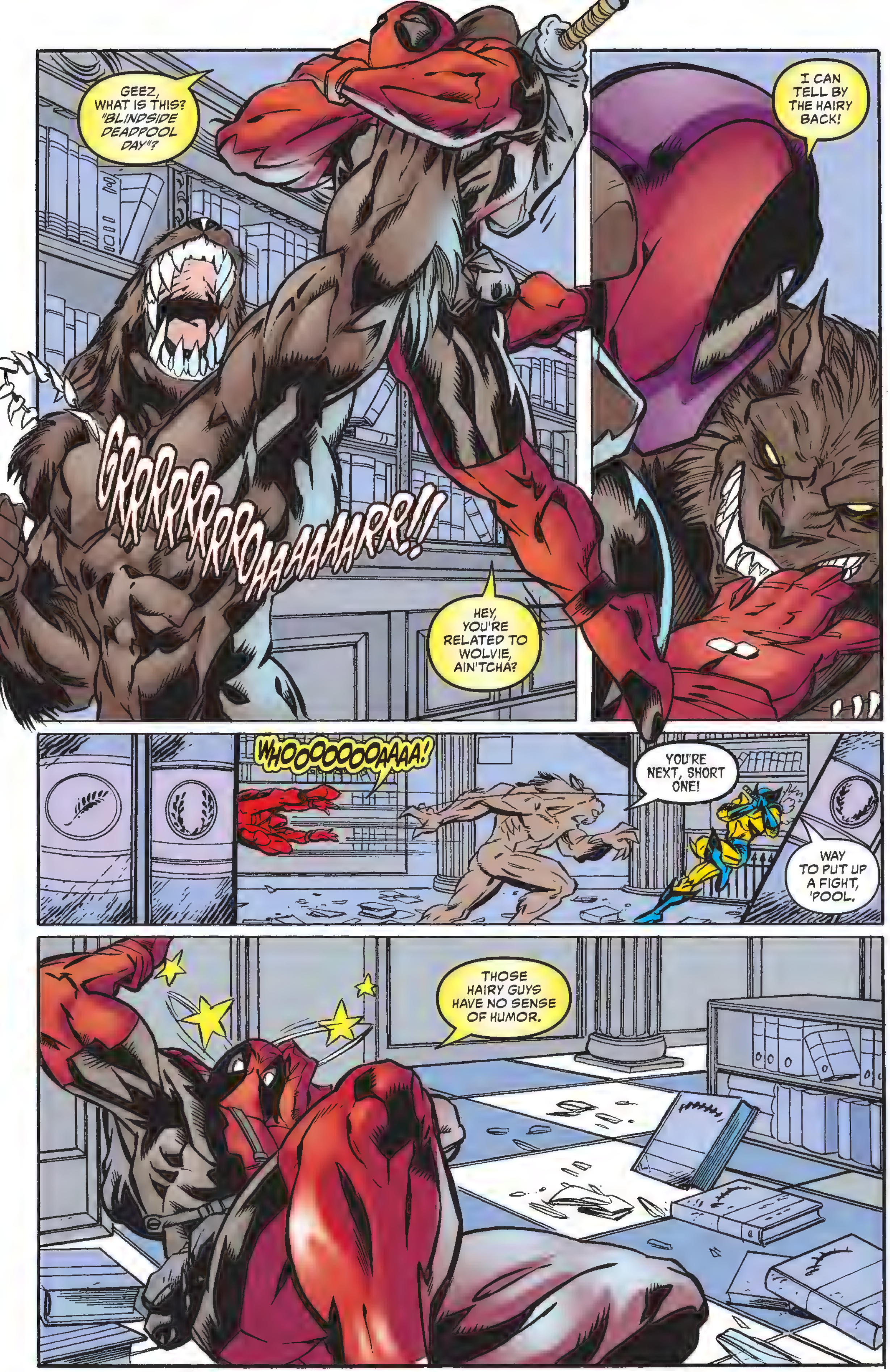

NO. IT CANNOT BE. NOT NOW.
HELLO, "DUNCAN VESS."
NOT *YOU!*

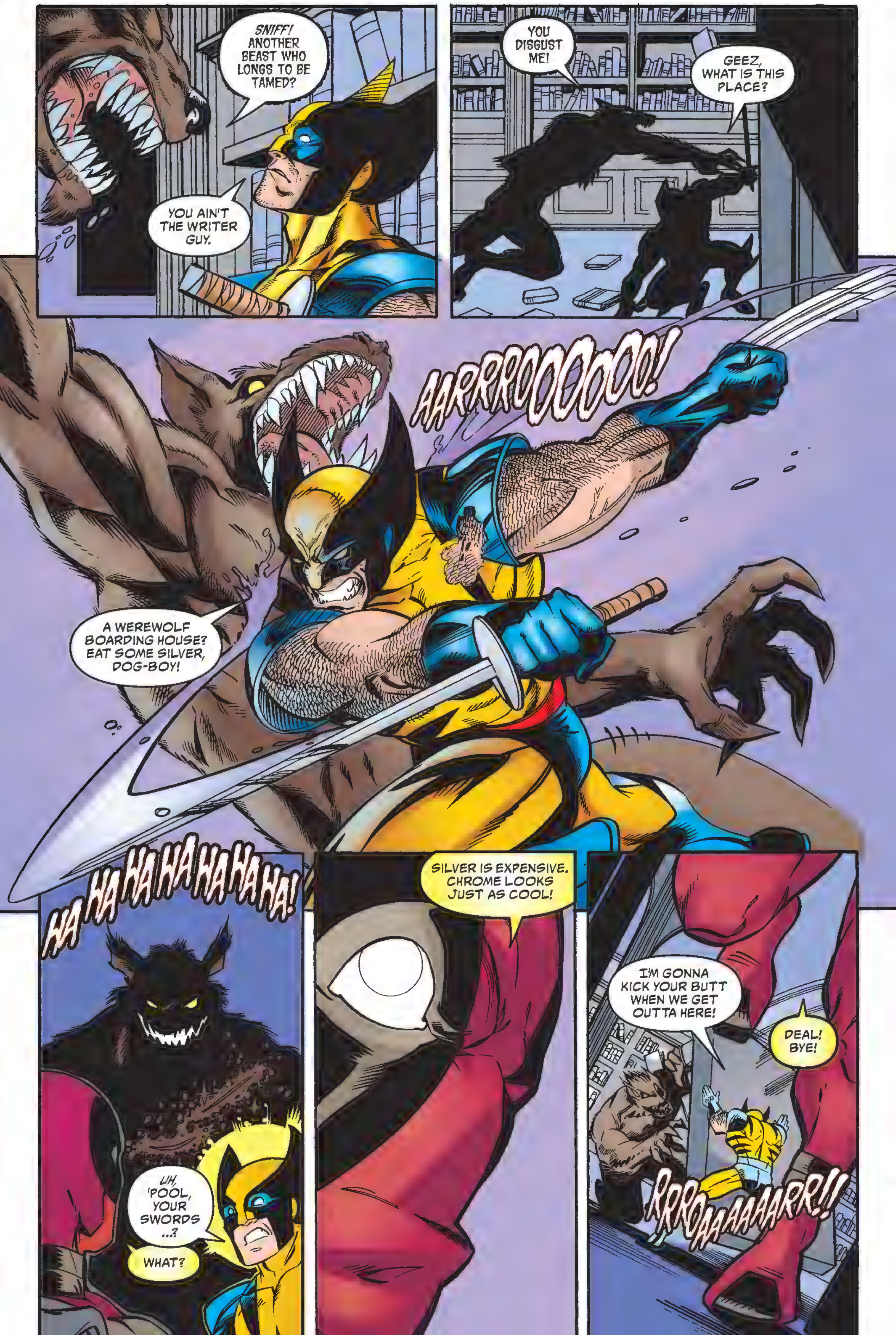

WATCHES ARE SYNCHRONIZED AND AWAY WE...
BAM!
OW! OW! OW! OW! OW!
THAT'S SOME ALARM SYSTEM.
HOWDY, 'POOL. HOW'S IT HANGIN'?
GREAT. SO NOW YOU'RE A COMEDIAN.

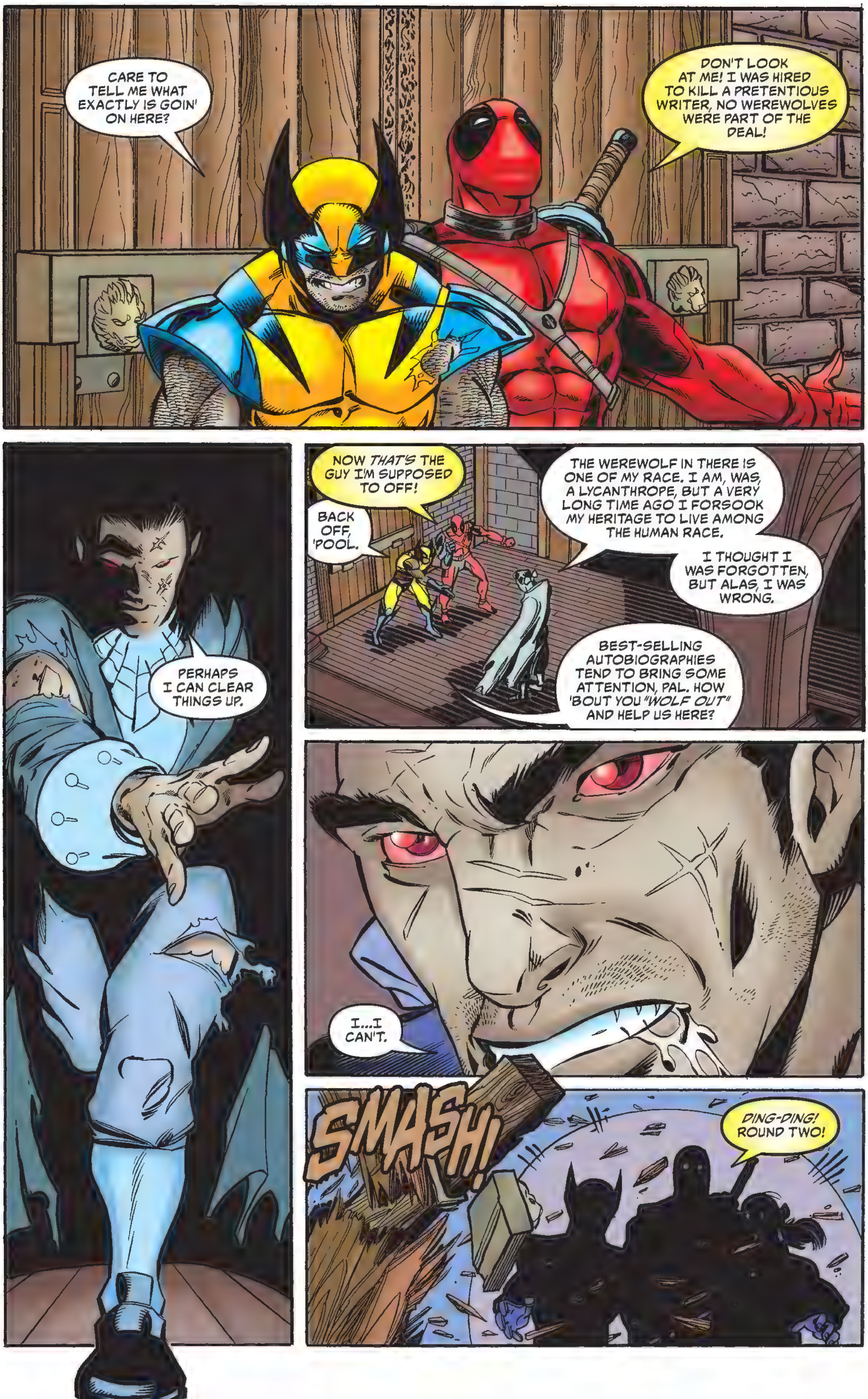

THWAK!
A BAD ONE! AND WE'RE TALKING BOB SAGET-BAD HERE!
CRUNCH!
GOOD. FIGHT BACK, BUB. THAT MAKES IT MORE FUN FOR ME...
...TA BASH IN YOUR SKULL!
KER-RACK!
UHN!
AGAIN: OW!
KLANK!
THIS IS --
OW!
THUD!
--FOR KITTY!*
SMAK!
OW!
*TO SEE "WHAT FOR", CHECK OUT DEADPOOL #27. -- MARK
DO YOU -UHH- WANT ME TO -OUCH- APOLOGIZE? OKAY, I'M...
SCHLIKT!
OH, NO. NOT THE CLAWS.

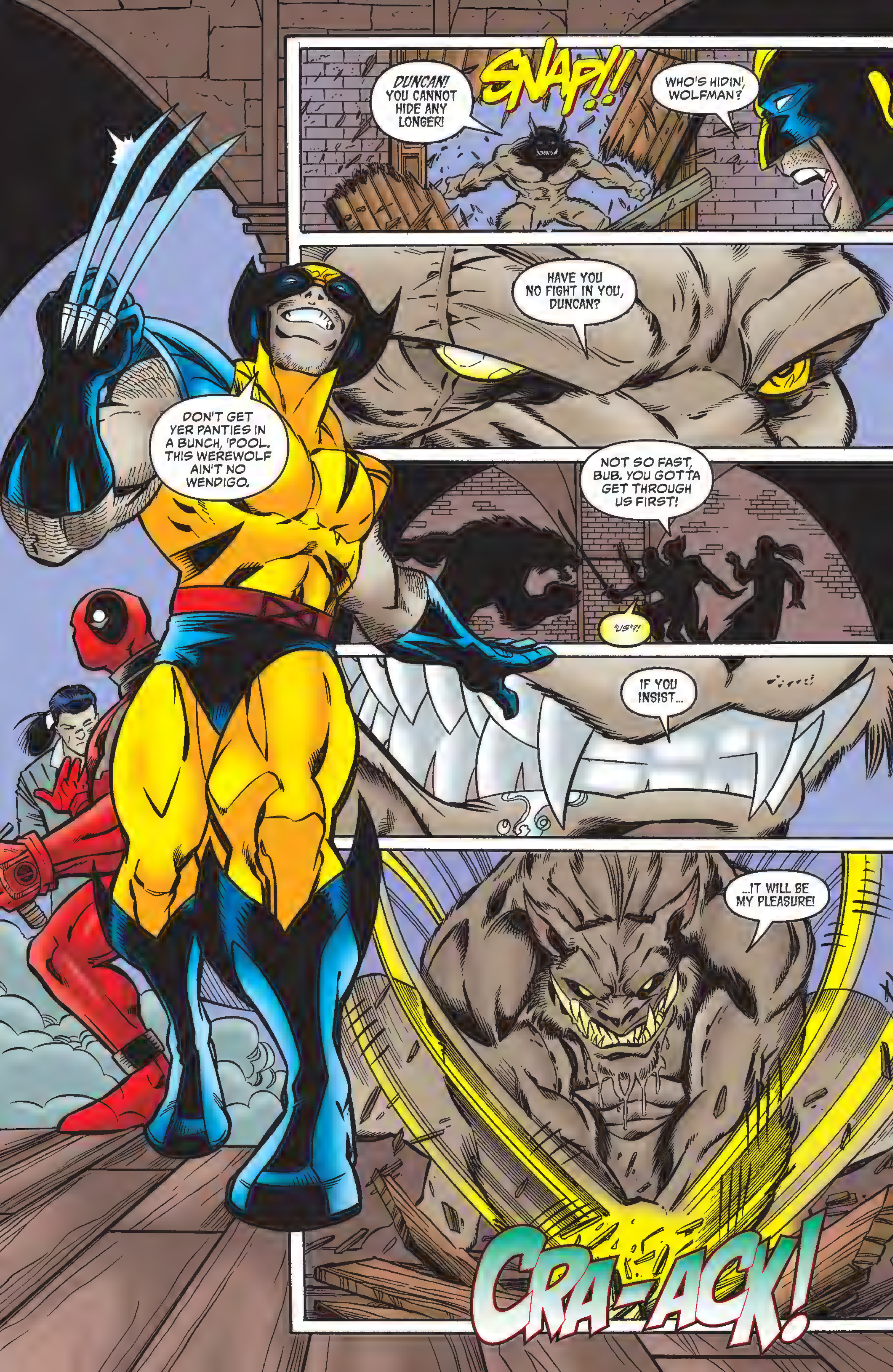

CRASH!
ENOUGH'S ENOUGH, FURBALL! I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO!
WHAT? KILLIN' THE "ANNE RICE" OF WEREWOLF BOOKS?
CAN YOU JUST SHUT UP?

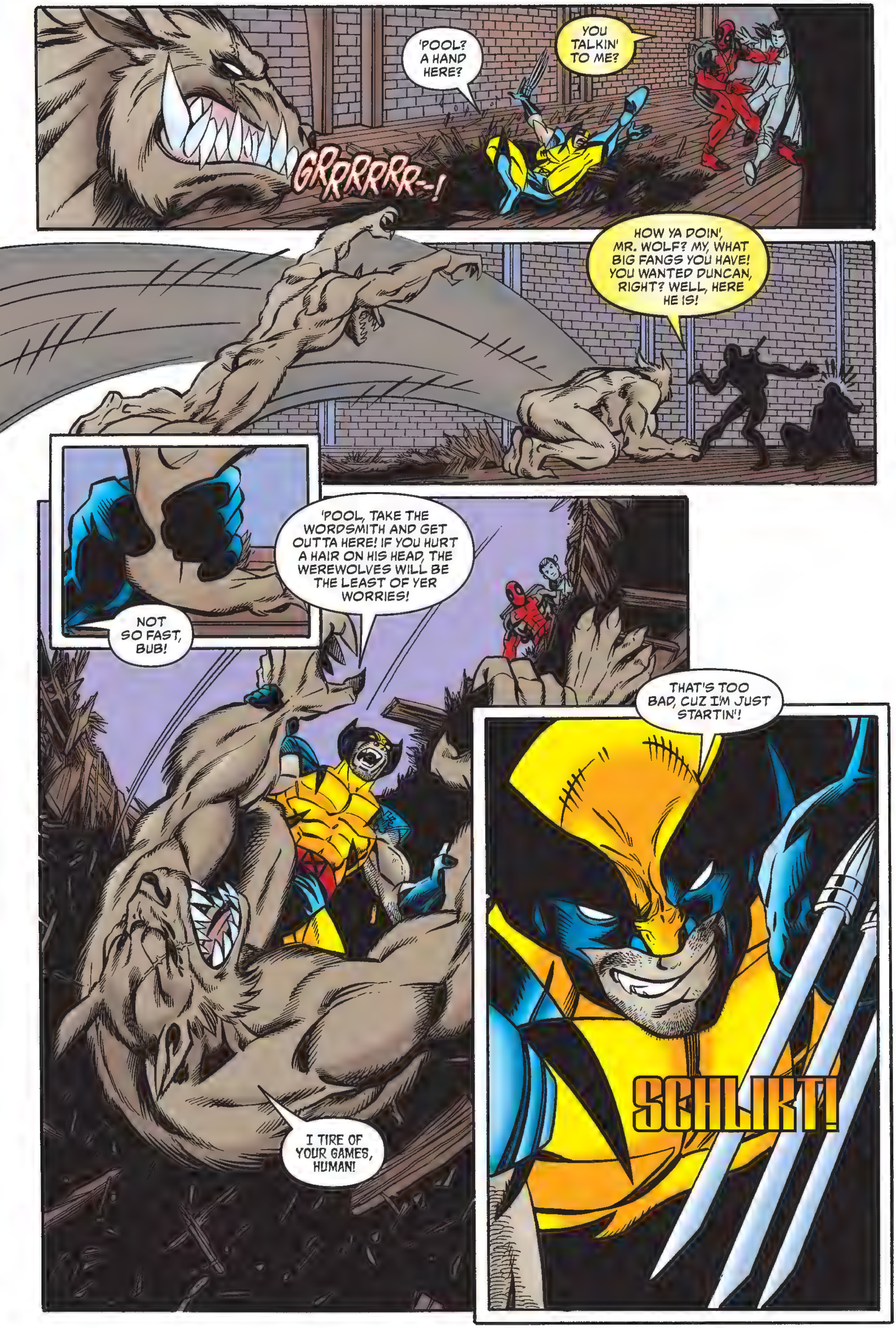

UHH!
THUMP!
YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE TO TURN MY FACE INTO A FINE TOMATO PUREE, WOLVIE. NOW, IT'S MY TURN!
WHOOSH!
UH, 'POOL (AND OUCH, BY THE WAY!), I THINK YOU'D BETTER --
-- LOOK BEHIND YOU.
"BEHIND ME"? DO YOU THINK I JUST FELL OFF THE...
GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
...TURNIP TRUCK? UH-OH.

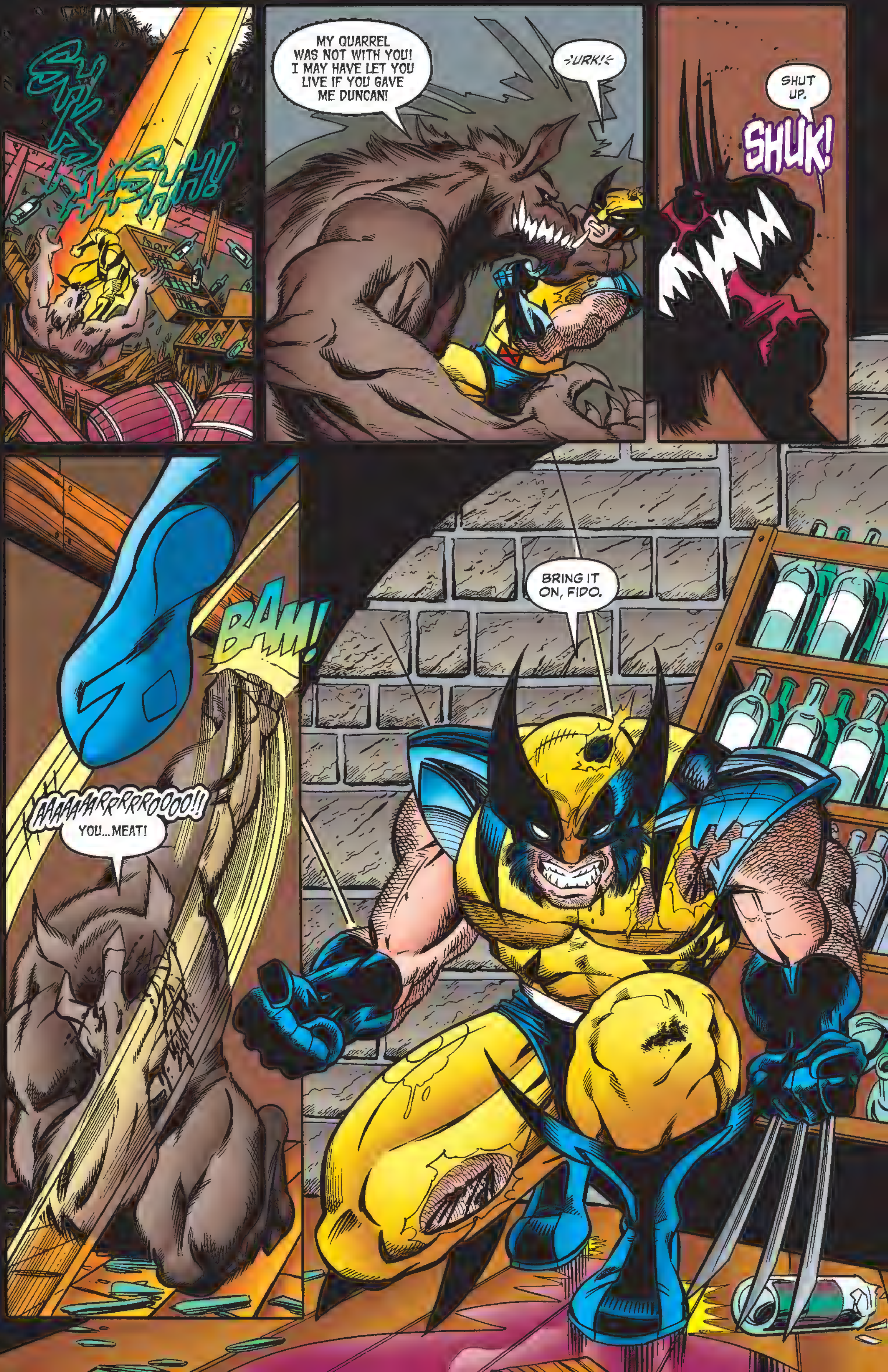

GEEZ, WHAT IS THIS? "BLINDSIDE DEADPOOL DAY"?
GRRRRRRRROAAAAAARR!!
HEY, YOU'RE RELATED TO WOLVIE, AIN'TCHA?
I CAN TELL BY THE HAIRY BACK!
WHOOOOOOOAAAA!
YOU'RE NEXT, SHORT ONE!
WAY TO PUT UP A FIGHT, 'POOL.
THOSE HAIRY GUYS HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMOR.

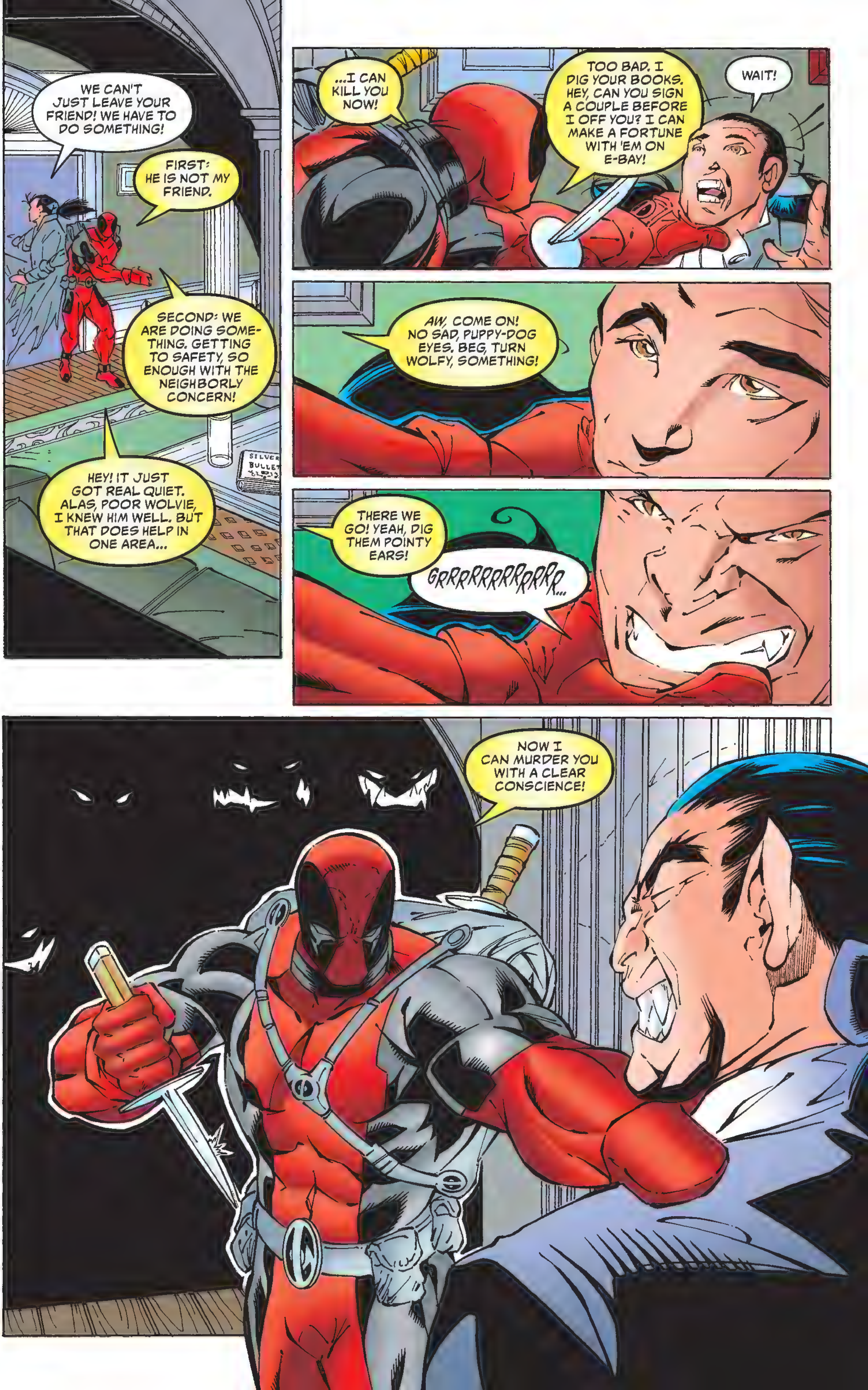

SNIFF! ANOTHER BEAST WHO LONGS TO BE TAMED?
YOU AIN'T THE WRITER GUY.
YOU DISGUST ME!
GEEZ, WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
AARRROOOOOOO!
A WEREWOLF BOARDING HOUSE? EAT SOME SILVER, DOG-BOY!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
UH, 'POOL, YOUR SWORDS ...?
WHAT?
SILVER IS EXPENSIVE. CHROME LOOKS JUST AS COOL!
I'M GONNA KICK YOUR BUTT WHEN WE GET OUTTA HERE!
DEAL! BYE!
RRROAAAAAARR!!

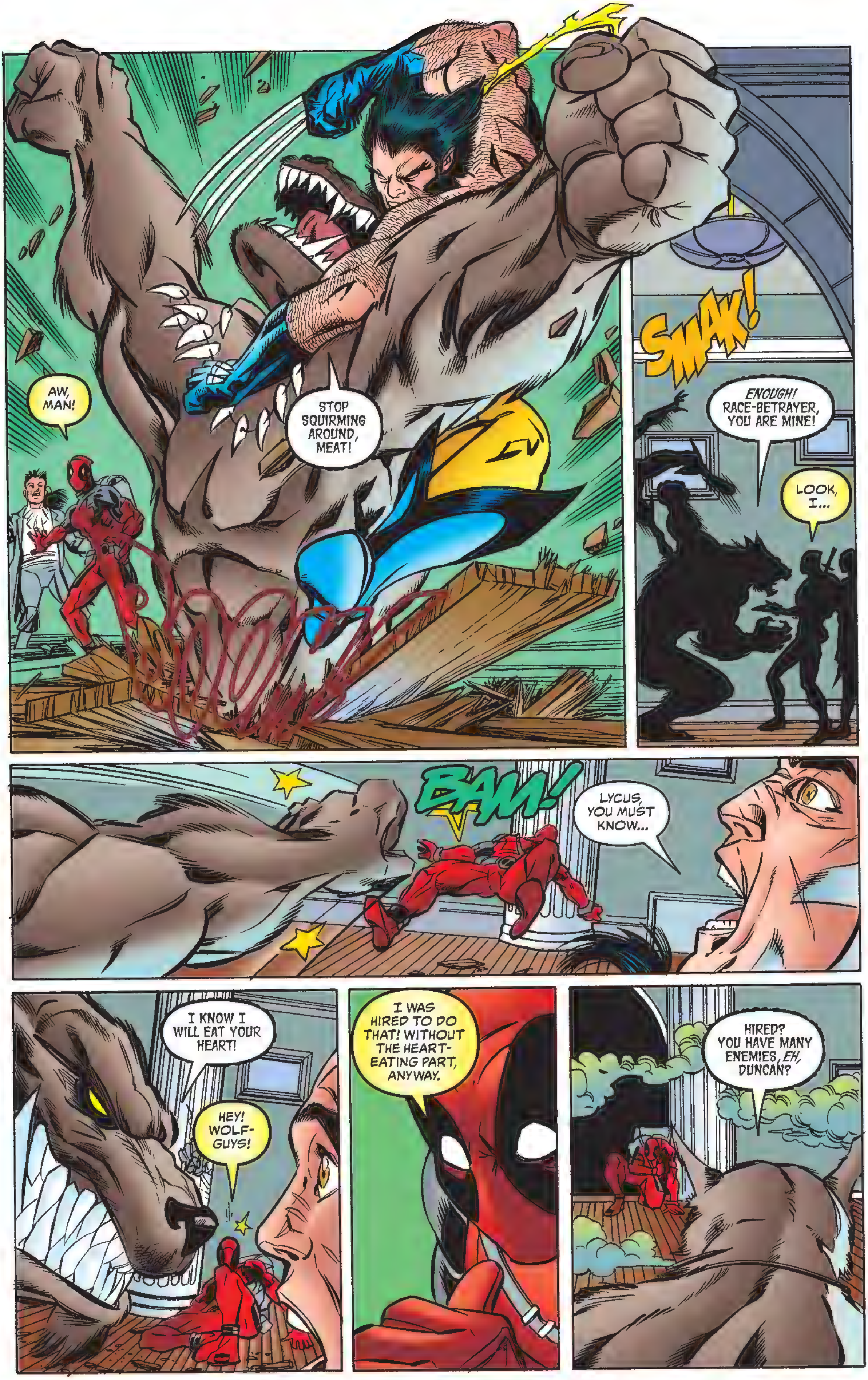

CARE TO TELL ME WHAT EXACTLY IS GOIN' ON HERE?
DON'T LOOK AT ME! I WAS HIRED TO KILL A PRETENTIOUS WRITER, NO WEREWOLVES WERE PART OF THE DEAL!
PERHAPS I CAN CLEAR THINGS UP.
NOW *THAT'S* THE GUY I'M SUPPOSED TO OFF!
BACK OFF, 'POOL.
THE WEREWOLF IN THERE IS ONE OF MY RACE. I AM, WAS, A LYCANTHROPE, BUT A VERY LONG TIME AGO I FORSOOK MY HERITAGE TO LIVE AMONG THE HUMAN RACE.
I THOUGHT I WAS FORGOTTEN, BUT ALAS, I WAS WRONG.
BEST-SELLING AUTOBIOGRAPHIES TEND TO BRING SOME ATTENTION, PAL. HOW 'BOUT YOU *"WOLF OUT"* AND HELP US HERE?
I...I CAN'T.
SMASH!
DING-DING! ROUND TWO!

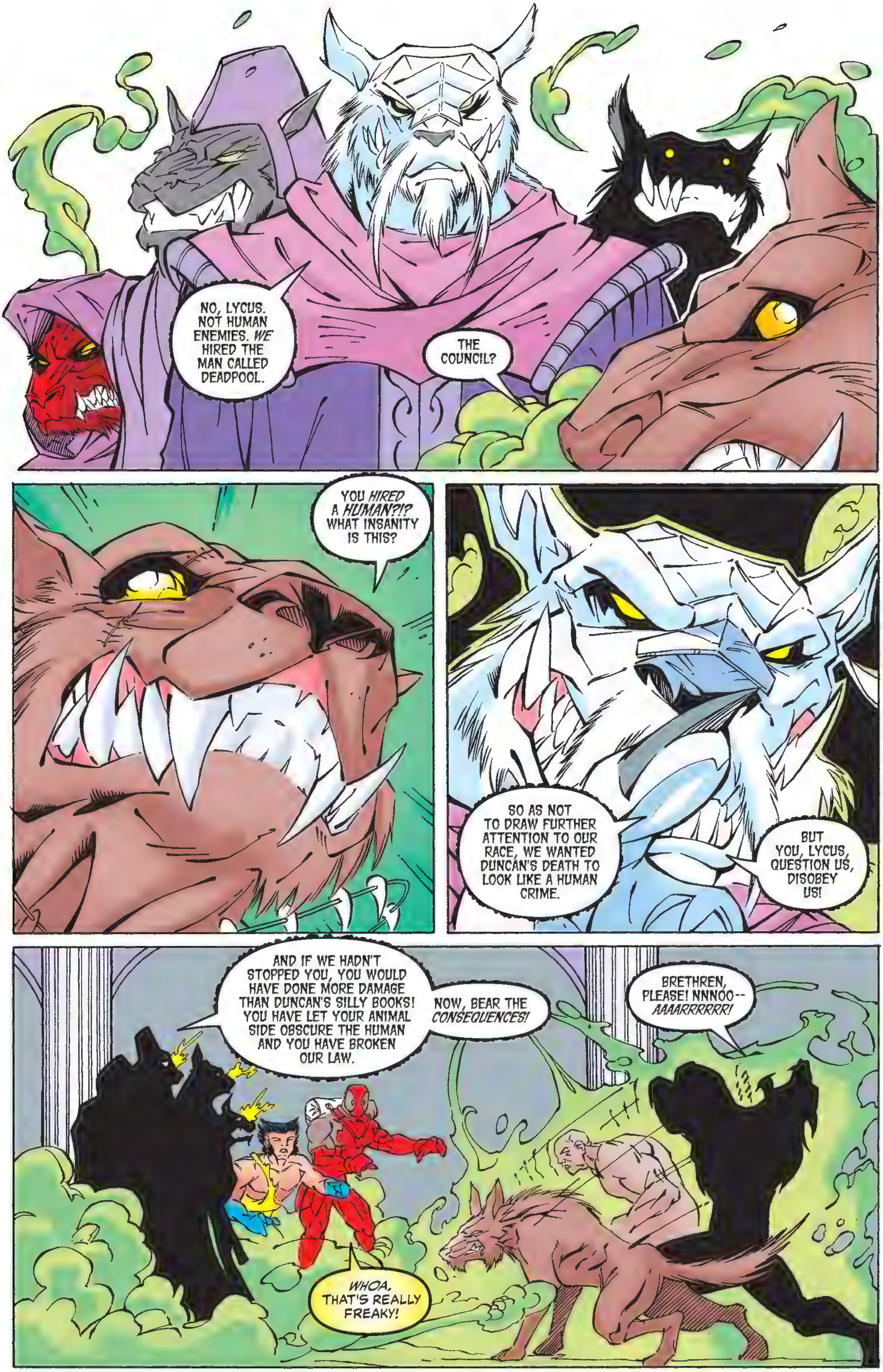

DON'T GET YER PANTIES IN A BUNCH, 'POOL. THIS WEREWOLF AIN'T NO WENDIGO.
DUNCAN! YOU CANNOT HIDE ANY LONGER!
SNAP!!
WHO'S HIDIN', WOLFMAN?
HAVE YOU NO FIGHT IN YOU, DUNCAN?
NOT SO FAST, BUB. YOU GOTTA GET THROUGH US FIRST!
"US"?!
IF YOU INSIST...
...IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE!
CRA-ACK!

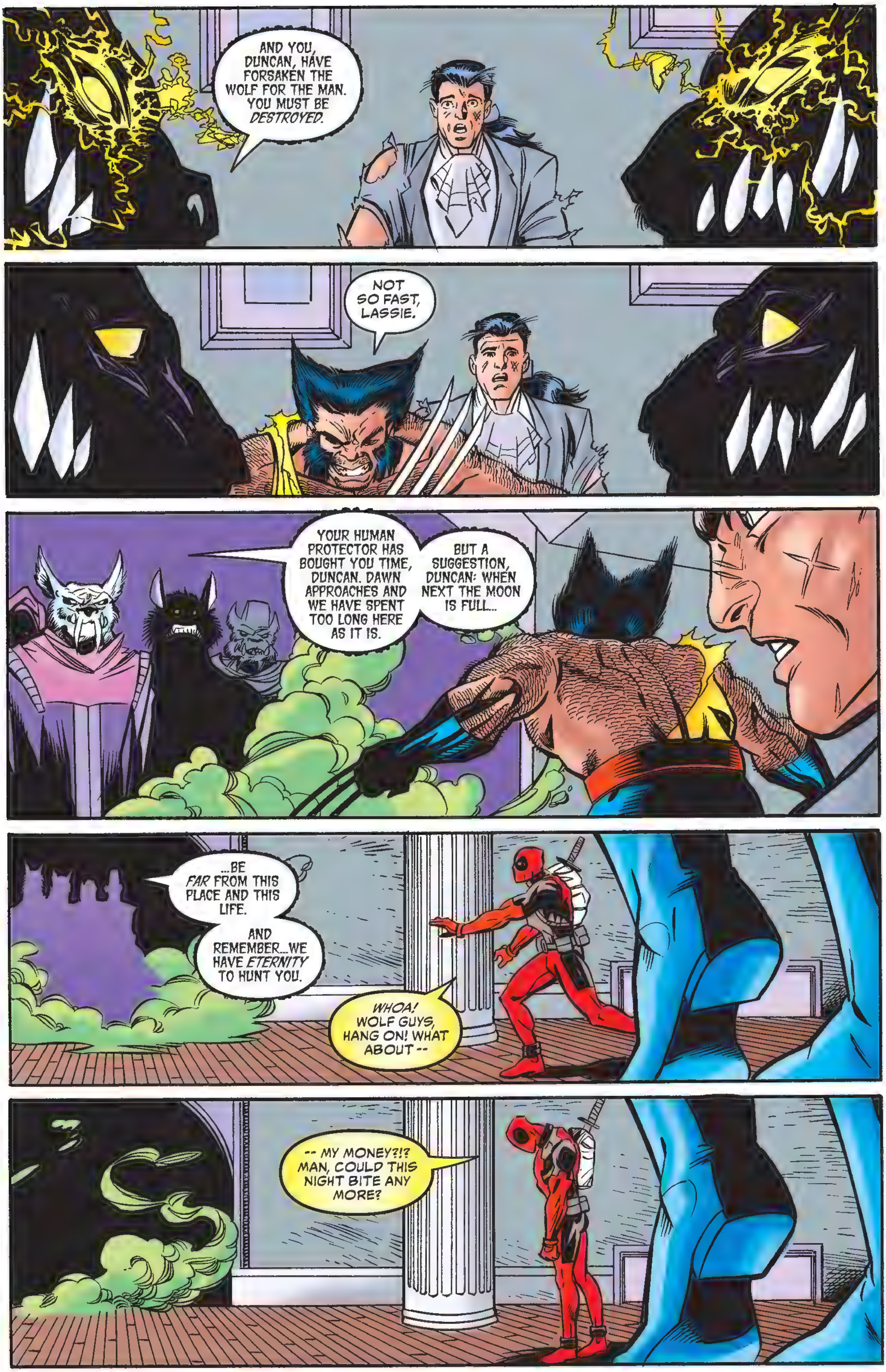

'POOL? A HAND HERE?
YOU TALKIN' TO ME?
GRRRRRR-!
HOW YA DOIN', MR. WOLF? MY, WHAT BIG FANGS YOU HAVE! YOU WANTED DUNCAN, RIGHT? WELL, HERE HE IS!
NOT SO FAST, BUB!
'POOL, TAKE THE WORDSMITH AND GET OUTTA HERE! IF YOU HURT A HAIR ON HIS HEAD, THE WEREWOLVES WILL BE THE LEAST OF YER WORRIES!
I TIRE OF YOUR GAMES, HUMAN!
THAT'S TOO BAD, CUZ I'M JUST STARTIN'!
SCHLIKT!

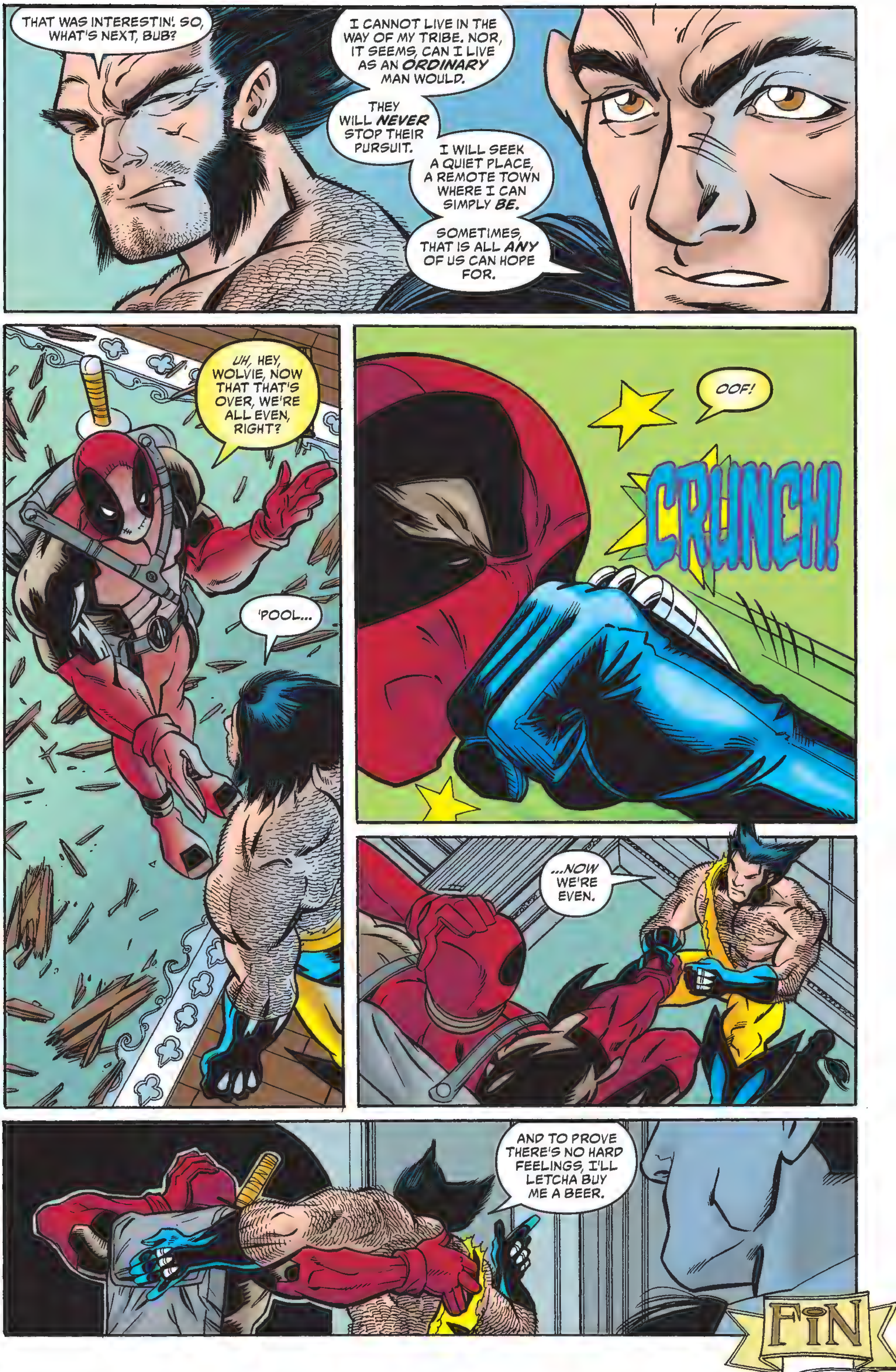

SPKRASHH!
MY QUARREL WAS NOT WITH YOU! I MAY HAVE LET YOU LIVE IF YOU GAVE ME DUNCAN!
-URK!-
SHUT UP.
SHUK!
BAM!
AAAAAARRRRROOOO!!
YOU...MEAT!
BRING IT ON, FIDO.


WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOUR FRIEND! WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!
FIRST: HE IS NOT MY FRIEND.
SECOND: WE ARE DOING SOMETHING. GETTING TO SAFETY, SO ENOUGH WITH THE NEIGHBORLY CONCERN!
SILVER BULLET
HEY! IT JUST GOT REAL QUIET. ALAS, POOR WOLVIE, I KNEW HIM WELL. BUT THAT DOES HELP IN ONE AREA...
...I CAN KILL YOU NOW!
TOO BAD. I DIG YOUR BOOKS. HEY, CAN YOU SIGN A COUPLE BEFORE I OFF YOU? I CAN MAKE A FORTUNE WITH 'EM ON E-BAY!
WAIT!
AW, COME ON! NO SAD, PUPPY-DOG EYES. BEG, TURN WOLFY, SOMETHING!
THERE WE GO! YEAH, DIG THEM POINTY EARS!
GRRRRRRRRRRR...
NOW I CAN MURDER YOU WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE!


AW, MAN!
STOP SQUIRMING AROUND, MEAT!
SMAK!
ENOUGH! RACE-BETRAYER, YOU ARE MINE!
LOOK, I...
BAM!
LYCUS, YOU MUST KNOW...
I KNOW I WILL EAT YOUR HEART!
HEY! WOLF-GUYS!
I WAS HIRED TO DO THAT! WITHOUT THE HEART-EATING PART, ANYWAY.
HIRED? YOU HAVE MANY ENEMIES, *EH,* DUNCAN?


NO, LYCUS. NOT HUMAN ENEMIES. *WE* HIRED THE MAN CALLED DEADPOOL.
THE COUNCIL?
YOU *HIRED* A *HUMAN?!?* WHAT INSANITY IS THIS?
SO AS NOT TO DRAW FURTHER ATTENTION TO OUR RACE, WE WANTED DUNCAN'S DEATH TO LOOK LIKE A HUMAN CRIME.
BUT YOU, LYCUS, QUESTION US, DISOBEY US!
AND IF WE HADN'T STOPPED YOU, YOU WOULD HAVE DONE MORE DAMAGE THAN DUNCAN'S SILLY BOOKS! YOU HAVE LET YOUR ANIMAL SIDE OBSCURE THE HUMAN AND YOU HAVE BROKEN OUR LAW.
NOW, BEAR THE *CONSEQUENCES!*
BRETHREN, PLEASE! NNNOO-- *AAAARRRRRR!*
WHOA. THAT'S REALLY FREAKY!


AND YOU, DUNCAN, HAVE FORSAKEN THE WOLF FOR THE MAN. YOU MUST BE *DESTROYED*.
NOT SO FAST, LASSIE.
YOUR HUMAN PROTECTOR HAS BOUGHT YOU TIME, DUNCAN. DAWN APPROACHES AND WE HAVE SPENT TOO LONG HERE AS IT IS.
BUT A SUGGESTION, DUNCAN: WHEN NEXT THE MOON IS FULL...
...BE *FAR* FROM THIS PLACE AND THIS LIFE.
AND REMEMBER...WE HAVE *ETERNITY* TO HUNT YOU.
WHOA! WOLF GUYS, HANG ON! WHAT ABOUT --
-- MY MONEY?!? MAN, COULD THIS NIGHT BITE ANY MORE?


THAT WAS INTERESTIN'. SO, WHAT'S NEXT, BUB?
I CANNOT LIVE IN THE WAY OF MY TRIBE. NOR, IT SEEMS, CAN I LIVE AS AN *ORDINARY* MAN WOULD.
THEY WILL *NEVER* STOP THEIR PURSUIT.
I WILL SEEK A QUIET PLACE, A REMOTE TOWN WHERE I CAN SIMPLY *BE.*
SOMETIMES, THAT IS ALL *ANY* OF US CAN HOPE FOR.
UH, HEY, WOLVIE, NOW THAT THAT'S OVER, WE'RE ALL EVEN, RIGHT?
'POOL...
OOF!
CRUNCH!
...NOW WE'RE EVEN.
AND TO PROVE THERE'S NO HARD FEELINGS, I'LL LETCHA BUY ME A BEER.
FIN

MARVEL COMICS
#2 OF 5
CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS II™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ONE HERO WINS..
..ANOTHER FALLS!
..PUPPETS IN A DEADLY BRAWL!
CLAREMONT
JIMENEZ
ALPUENTE
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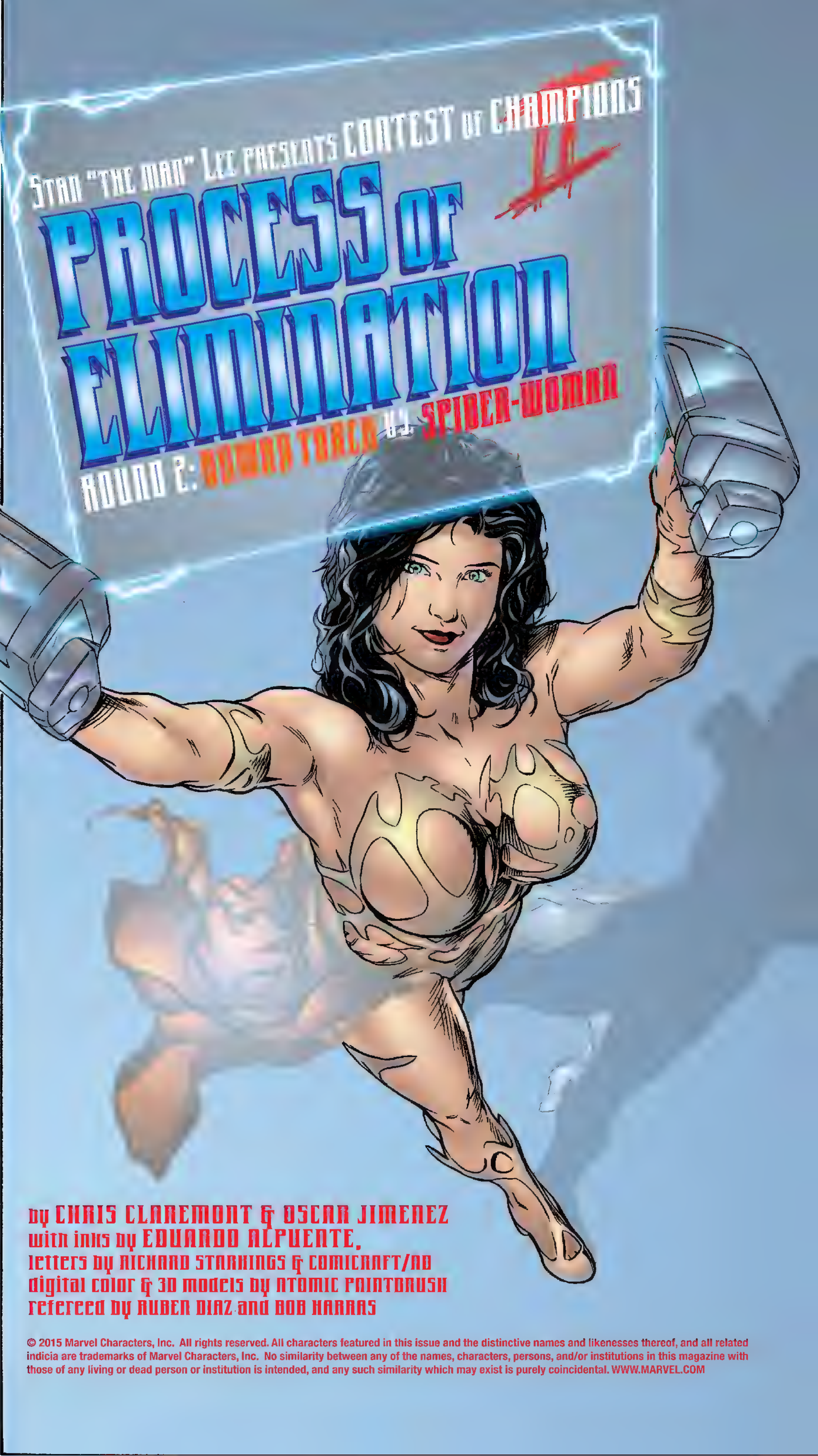

STAN "THE MAN" LEE PRESENTS CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS II

PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

ROUND 2: HUMAN TORCH VS. SPIDER-WOMAN

by CHRIS CLAREMONT & OSCAR JIMENEZ
with inks by EDUARDO ALPUENTE,
letters by RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT/AD
digital color & 3D models by ATOMIC PAINTBRUSH
refereed by RUBEN DIAZ and BOB HARRAS

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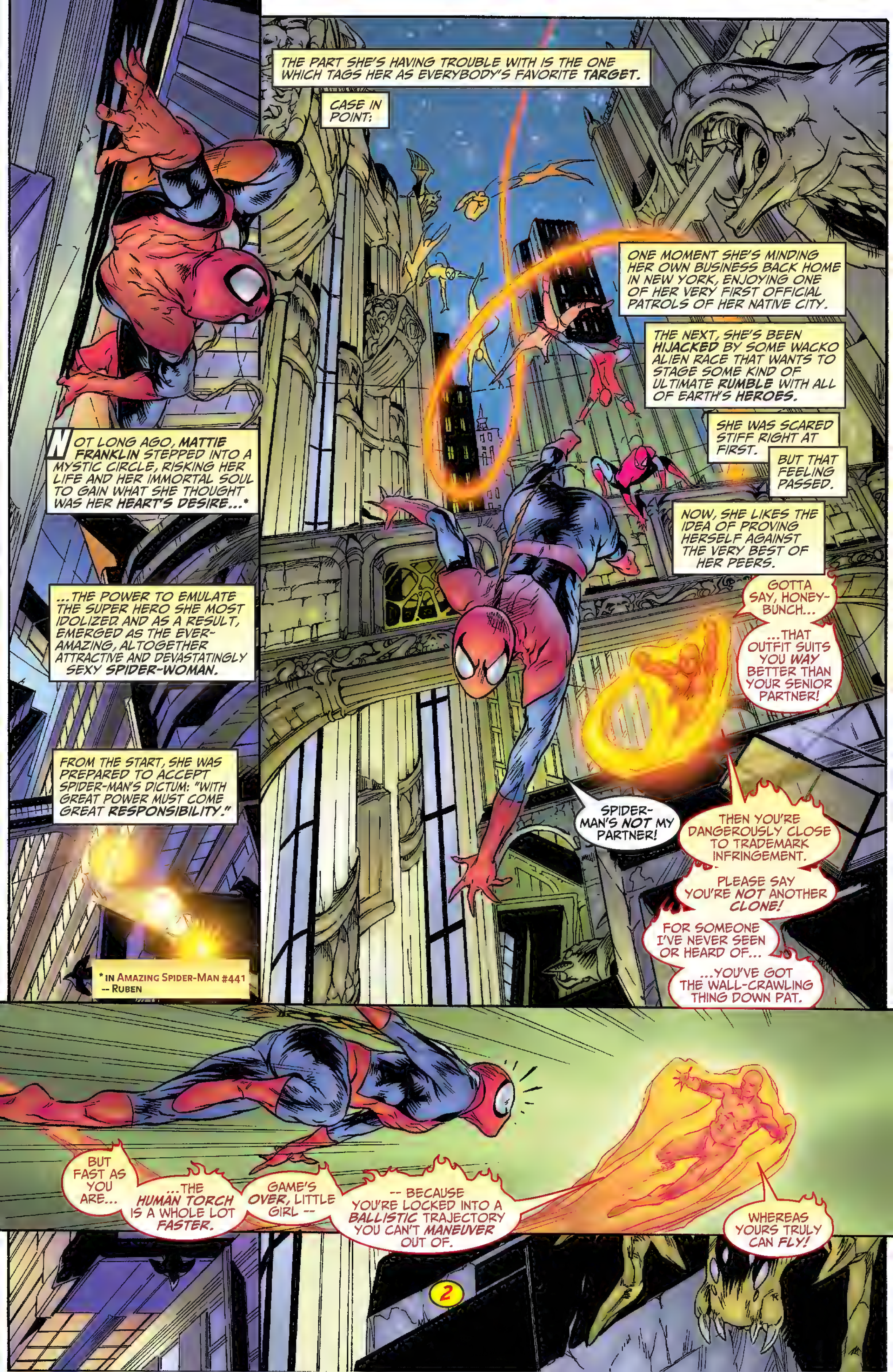
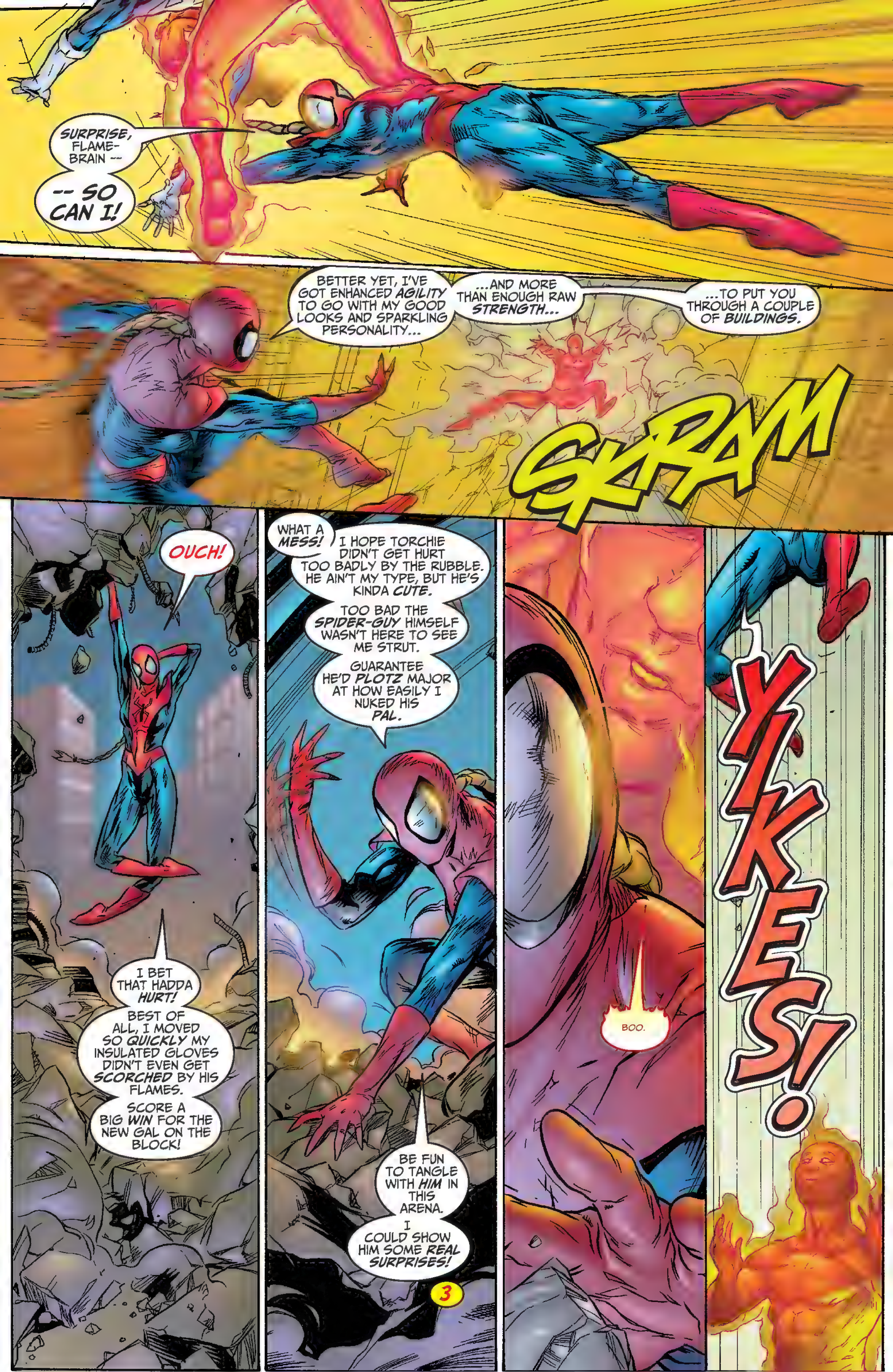
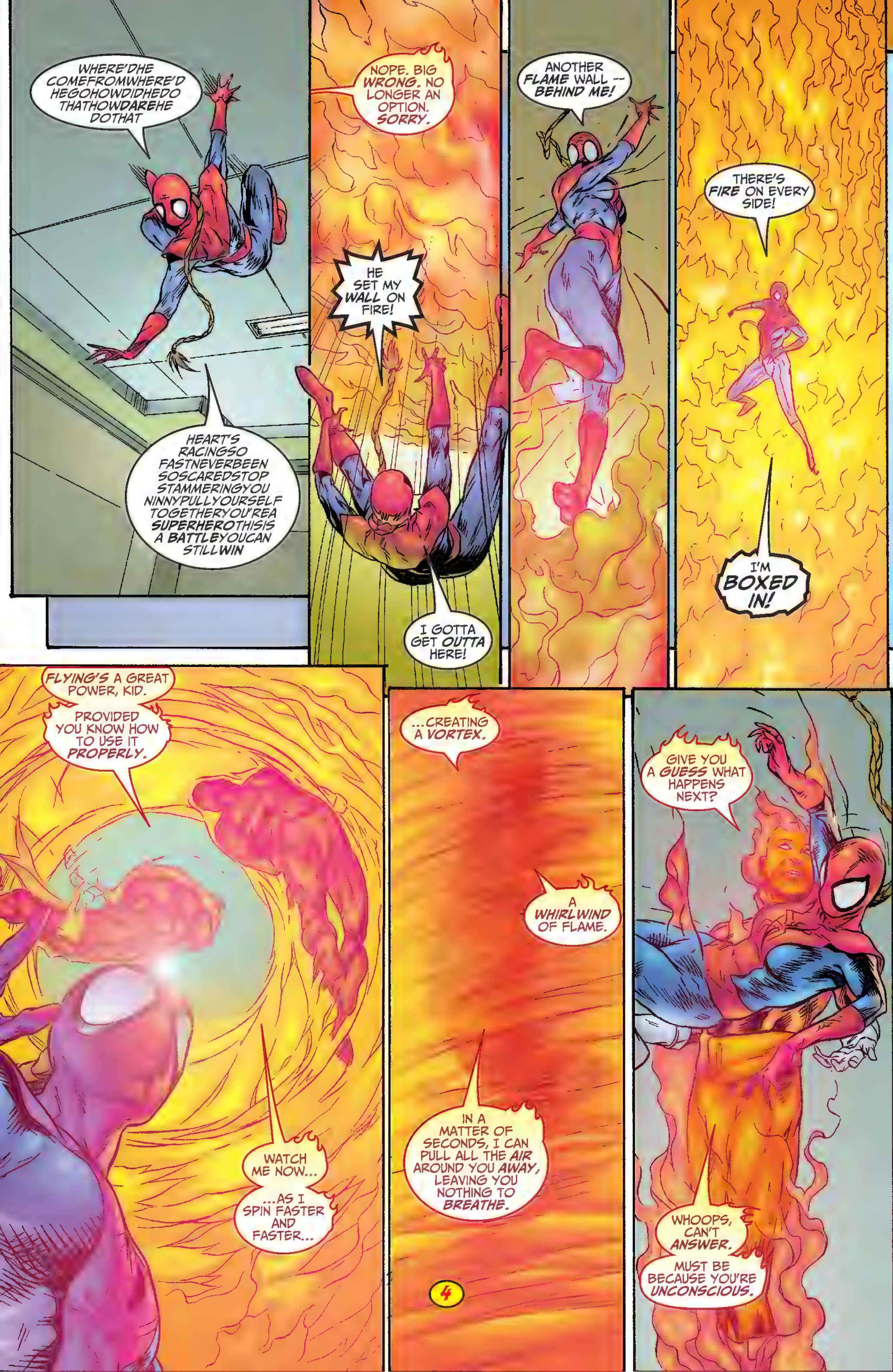
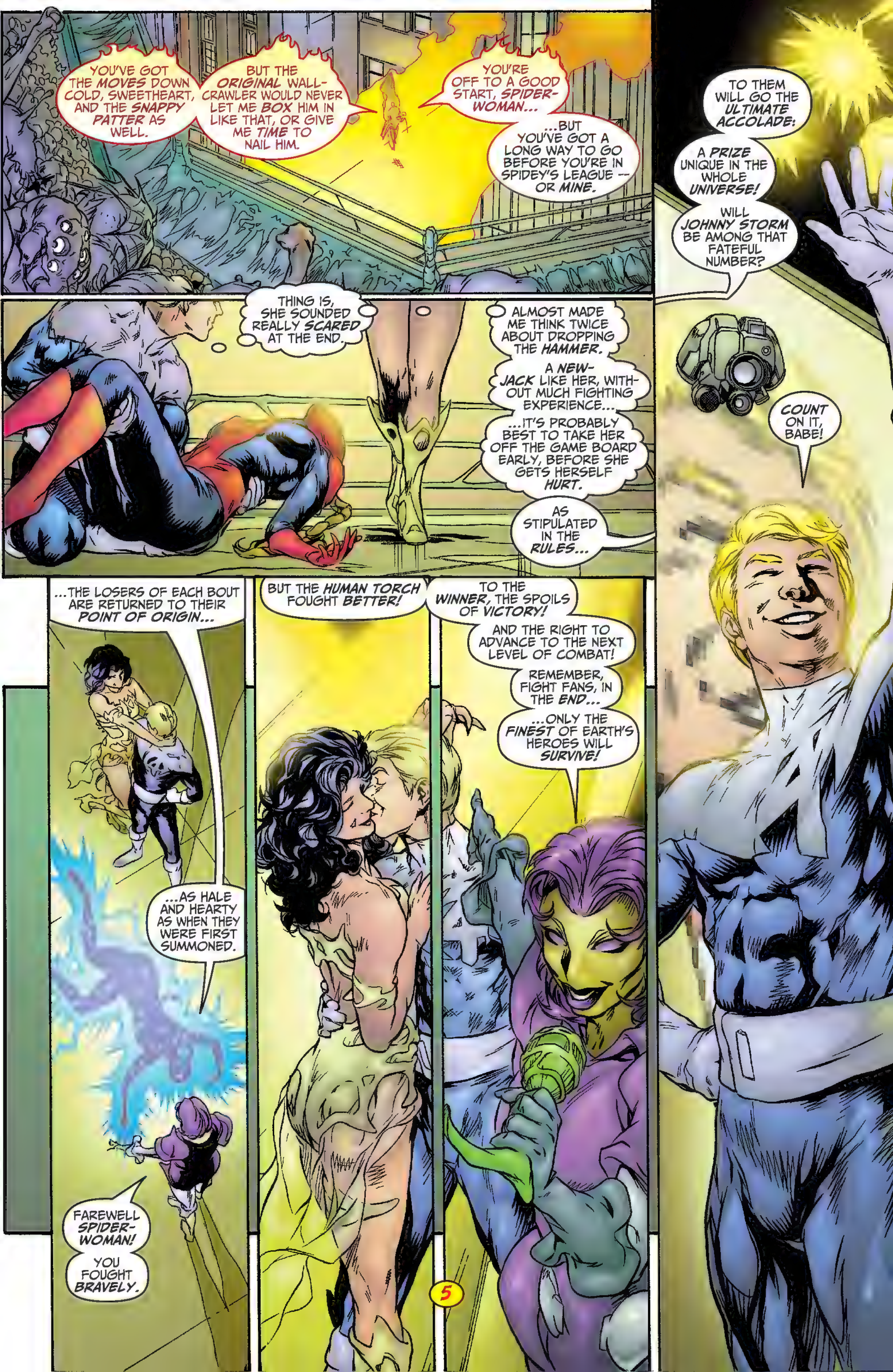
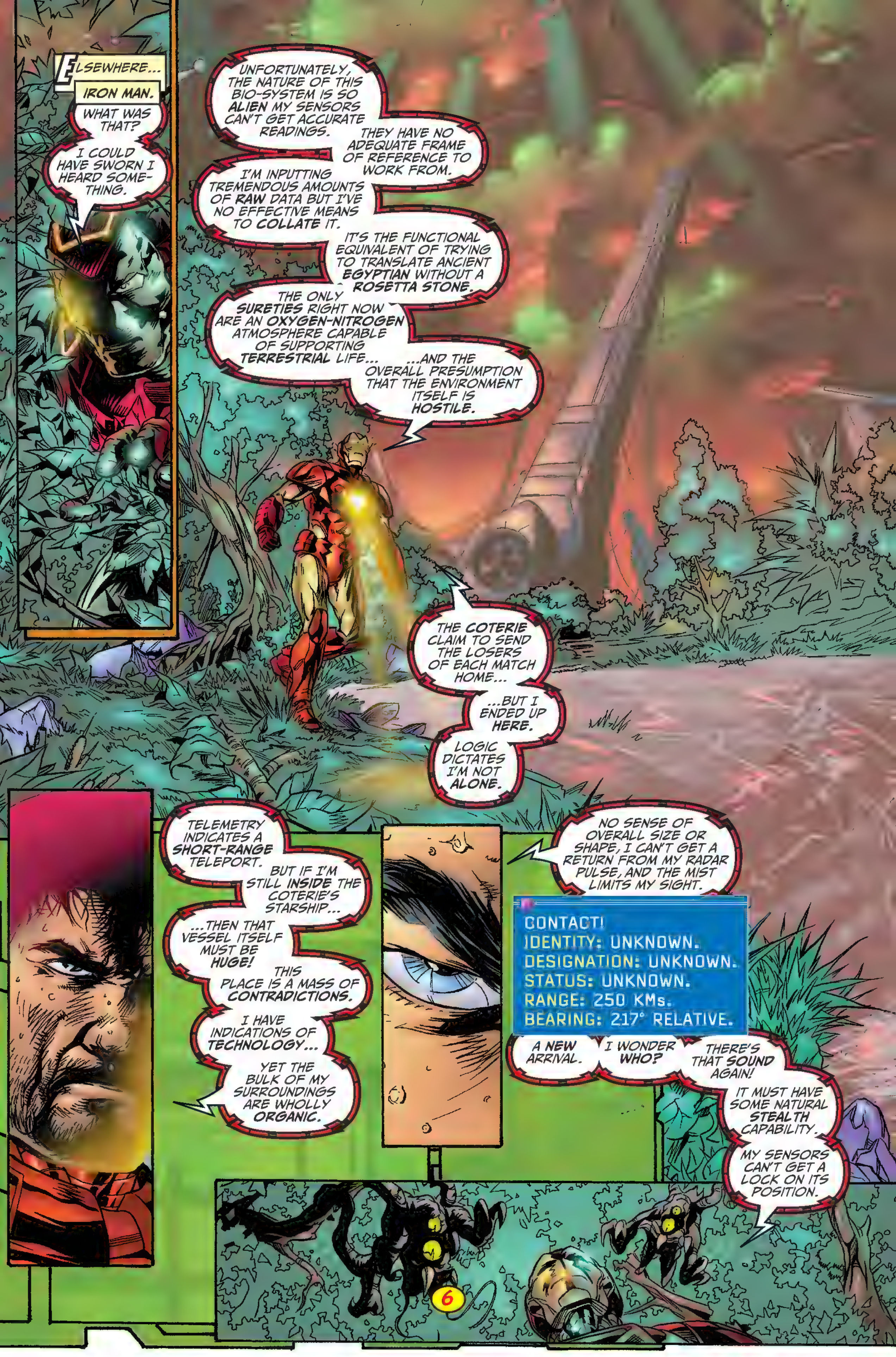
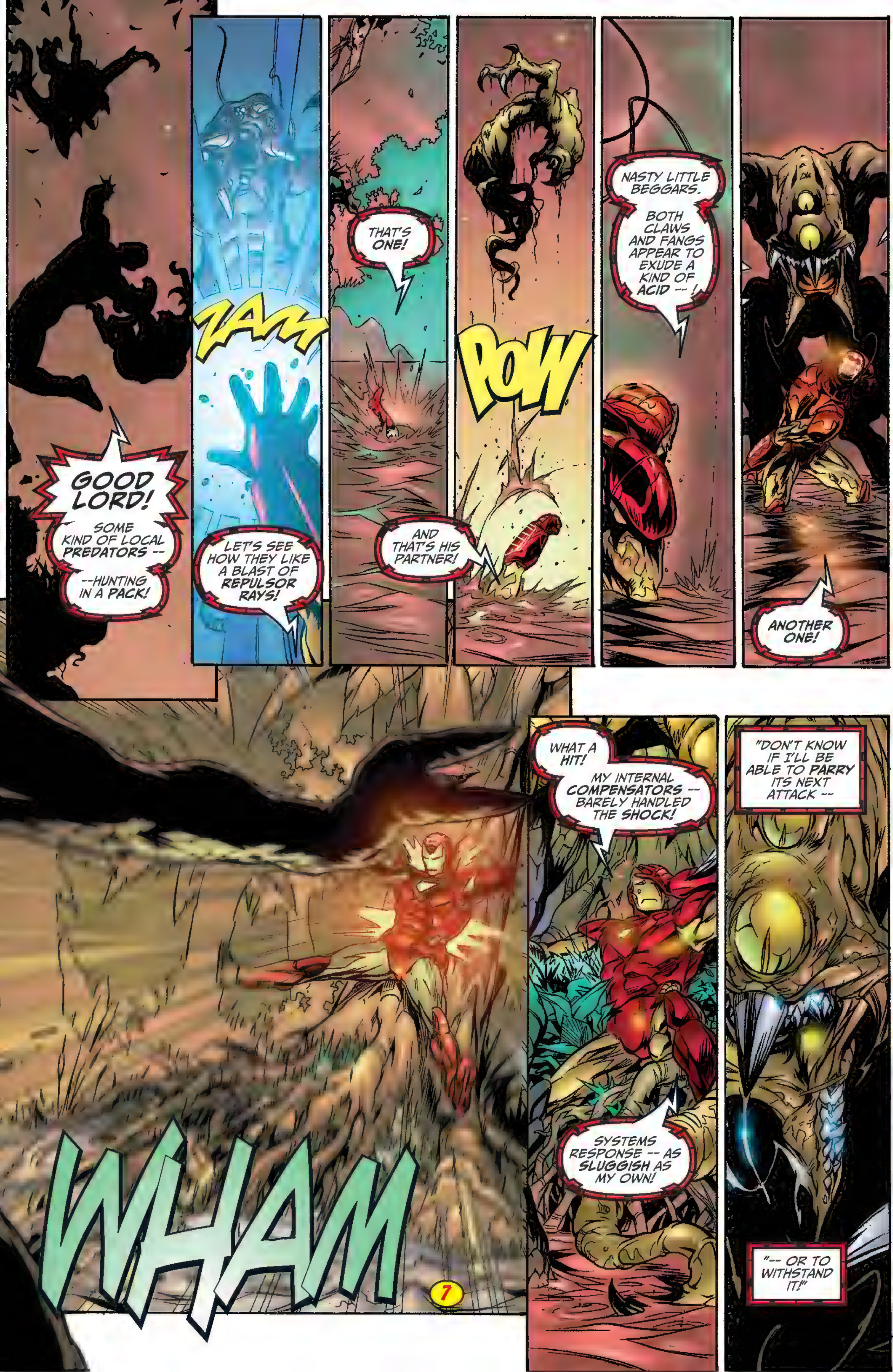

THE PART SHE'S HAVING TROUBLE WITH IS THE ONE WHICH TAGS HER AS EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE **TARGET**.
CASE IN POINT:
NOT LONG AGO, **MATTIE FRANKLIN** STEPPED INTO A MYSTIC CIRCLE, RISKING HER LIFE AND HER IMMORTAL SOUL TO GAIN WHAT SHE THOUGHT WAS HER **HEART'S DESIRE**...*
...THE POWER TO EMULATE THE SUPER HERO SHE MOST IDOLIZED. AND AS A RESULT, EMERGED AS THE EVER-AMAZING, ALTOGETHER ATTRACTIVE AND DEVASTATINGLY SEXY **SPIDER-WOMAN**.
FROM THE START, SHE WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT SPIDER-MAN'S DICTUM: "WITH GREAT POWER MUST COME GREAT **RESPONSIBILITY**."
* IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #441 -- RUBEN
ONE MOMENT SHE'S MINDING HER OWN BUSINESS BACK HOME IN NEW YORK, ENJOYING ONE OF HER VERY FIRST OFFICIAL PATROLS OF HER NATIVE CITY.
THE NEXT, SHE'S BEEN **HIJACKED** BY SOME WACKO ALIEN RACE THAT WANTS TO STAGE SOME KIND OF ULTIMATE **RUMBLE** WITH ALL OF EARTH'S **HEROES**.
SHE WAS SCARED STIFF RIGHT AT FIRST.
BUT THAT FEELING PASSED.
NOW, SHE LIKES THE IDEA OF PROVING HERSELF AGAINST THE VERY BEST OF HER PEERS.
GOTTA SAY, HONEY-BUNCH...
...THAT OUTFIT SUITS YOU *WAY* BETTER THAN YOUR SENIOR PARTNER!
SPIDER-MAN'S *NOT* MY PARTNER!
THEN YOU'RE DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO TRADEMARK INFRINGEMENT.
PLEASE SAY YOU'RE *NOT* ANOTHER *CLONE!*
FOR SOMEONE I'VE NEVER SEEN OR HEARD OF...
...YOU'VE GOT THE WALL-CRAWLING THING DOWN PAT.
BUT FAST AS YOU ARE...
...THE *HUMAN TORCH* IS A WHOLE LOT *FASTER*.
GAME'S *OVER*, LITTLE GIRL --
-- BECAUSE YOU'RE LOCKED INTO A *BALLISTIC* TRAJECTORY YOU CAN'T *MANEUVER* OUT OF.
WHEREAS YOURS TRULY CAN *FLY!*

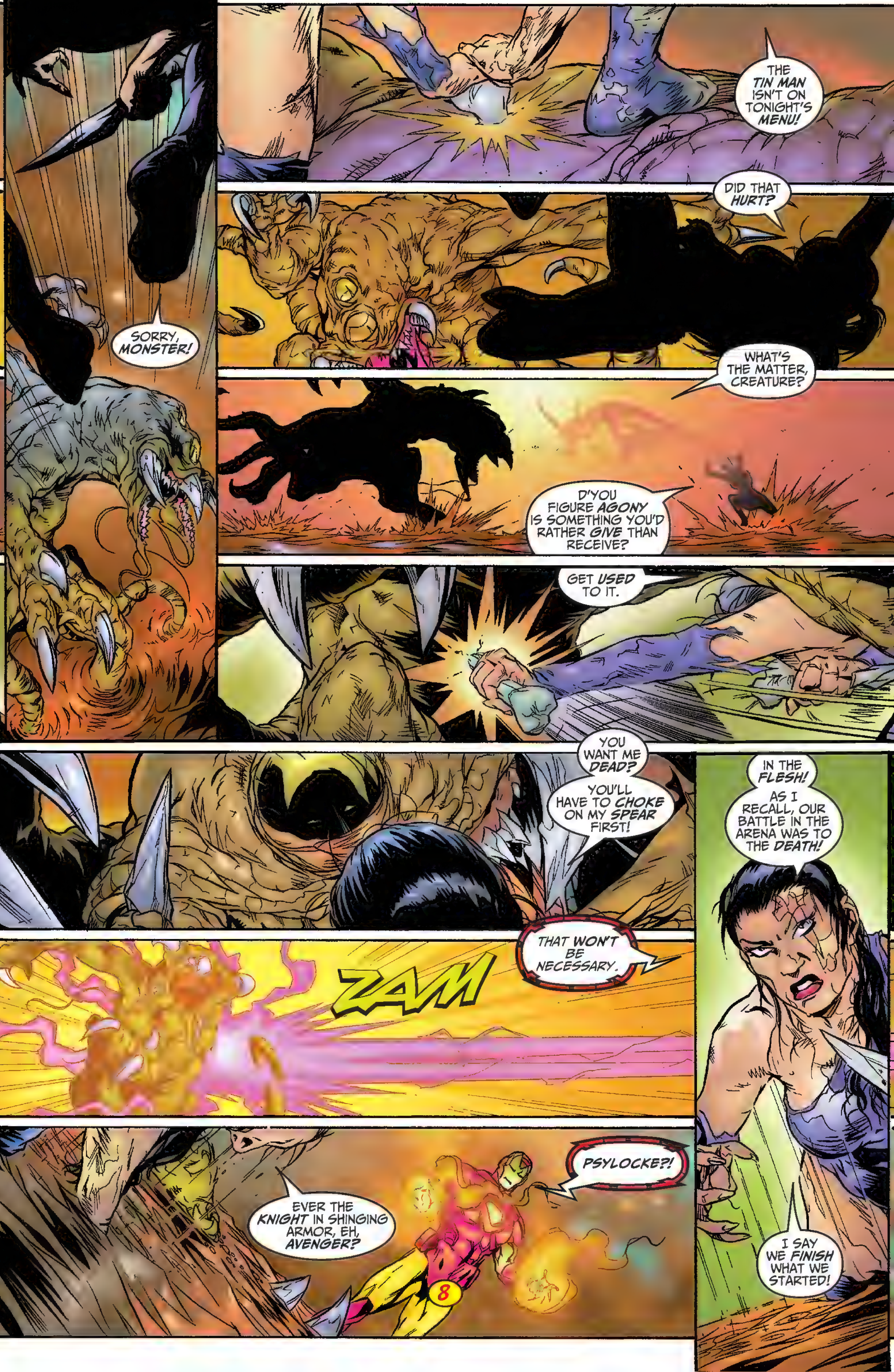

SURPRISE, FLAME-BRAIN --
-- SO CAN I!
BETTER YET, I'VE GOT ENHANCED *AGILITY* TO GO WITH MY GOOD LOOKS AND SPARKLING PERSONALITY...
...AND MORE THAN ENOUGH RAW *STRENGTH*...
...TO PUT YOU THROUGH A COUPLE OF *BUILDINGS.*
SKRAM
OUCH!
I BET THAT HADDA *HURT!*
BEST OF ALL, I MOVED SO *QUICKLY* MY INSULATED GLOVES DIDN'T EVEN GET *SCORCHED* BY HIS FLAMES.
SCORE A BIG *WIN* FOR THE NEW GAL ON THE BLOCK!
WHAT A *MESS!*
I HOPE TORCHIE DIDN'T GET HURT TOO BADLY BY THE RUBBLE. HE AIN'T MY TYPE, BUT HE'S KINDA *CUTE.*
TOO BAD THE *SPIDER-GUY* HIMSELF WASN'T HERE TO SEE ME STRUT.
GUARANTEE HE'D *PLOTZ* MAJOR AT HOW EASILY I NUKED HIS *PAL.*
BE FUN TO TANGLE WITH *HIM* IN THIS ARENA.
I COULD SHOW HIM SOME *REAL* *SURPRISES!*
BOO.
YIKES!

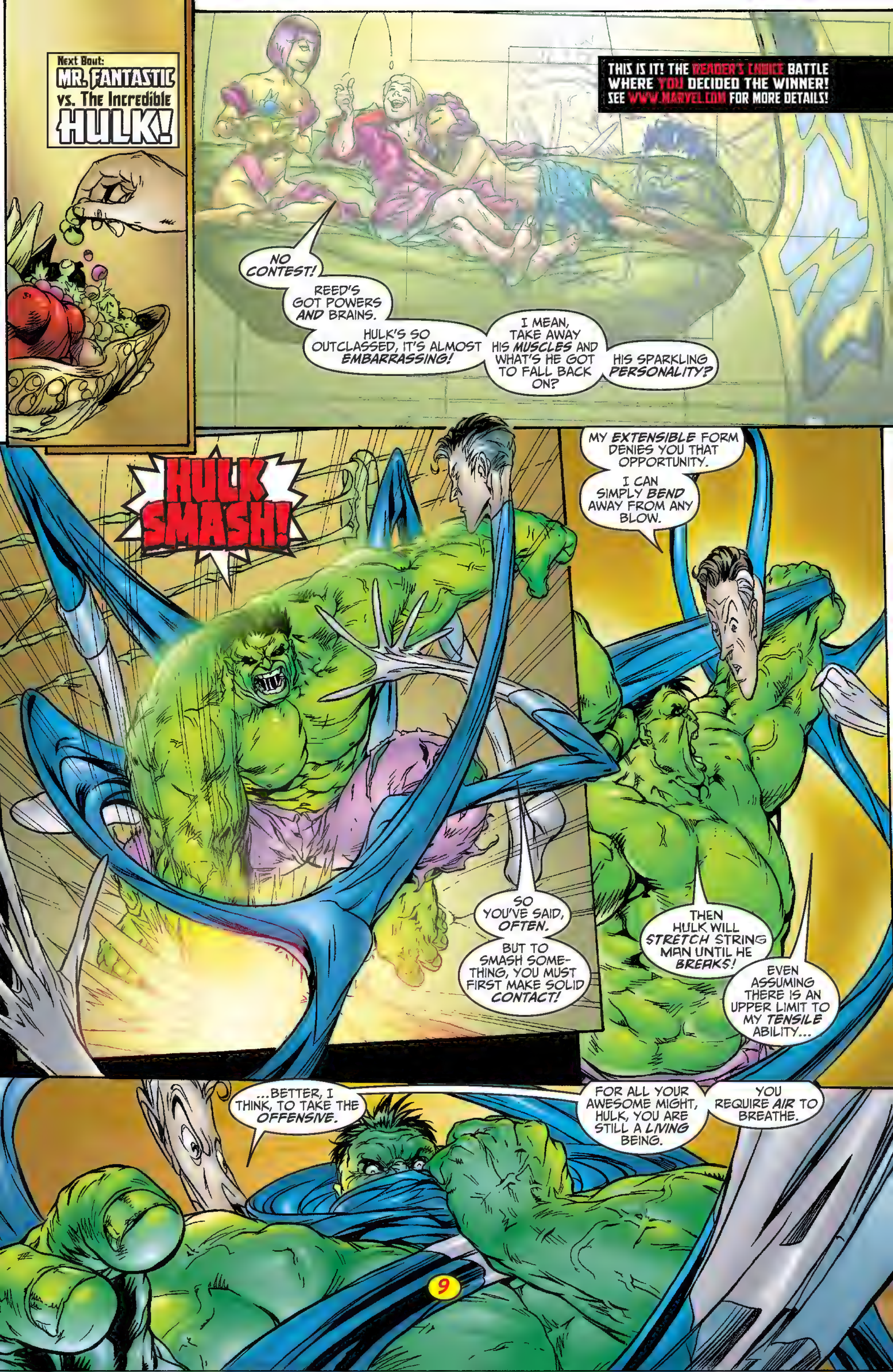

WHERE'DHE COMEFROMWHERE'D HEGOHOWDIDHEDO THATHOWDAREHE DOTHAT
HEART'S RACINGSO FASTNEVERBEEN SOSCAREDSTOP STAMMERINGYOU NINNYPULLYOURSELF TOGETHERYOU'REA SUPERHEROTHISIS A BATTLEYOUCAN STILLWIN
NOPE. BIG WRONG. NO LONGER AN OPTION. SORRY.
HE SET MY WALL ON FIRE!
I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!
ANOTHER FLAME WALL -- BEHIND ME!
THERE'S FIRE ON EVERY SIDE!
I'M BOXED IN!
FLYING'S A GREAT POWER, KID.
PROVIDED YOU KNOW HOW TO USE IT PROPERLY.
WATCH ME NOW...
...AS I SPIN FASTER AND FASTER...
...CREATING A VORTEX.
A WHIRLWIND OF FLAME.
IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, I CAN PULL ALL THE AIR AROUND YOU AWAY, LEAVING YOU NOTHING TO BREATHE.
GIVE YOU A GUESS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
WHOOPS, CAN'T ANSWER.
MUST BE BECAUSE YOU'RE UNCONSCIOUS.

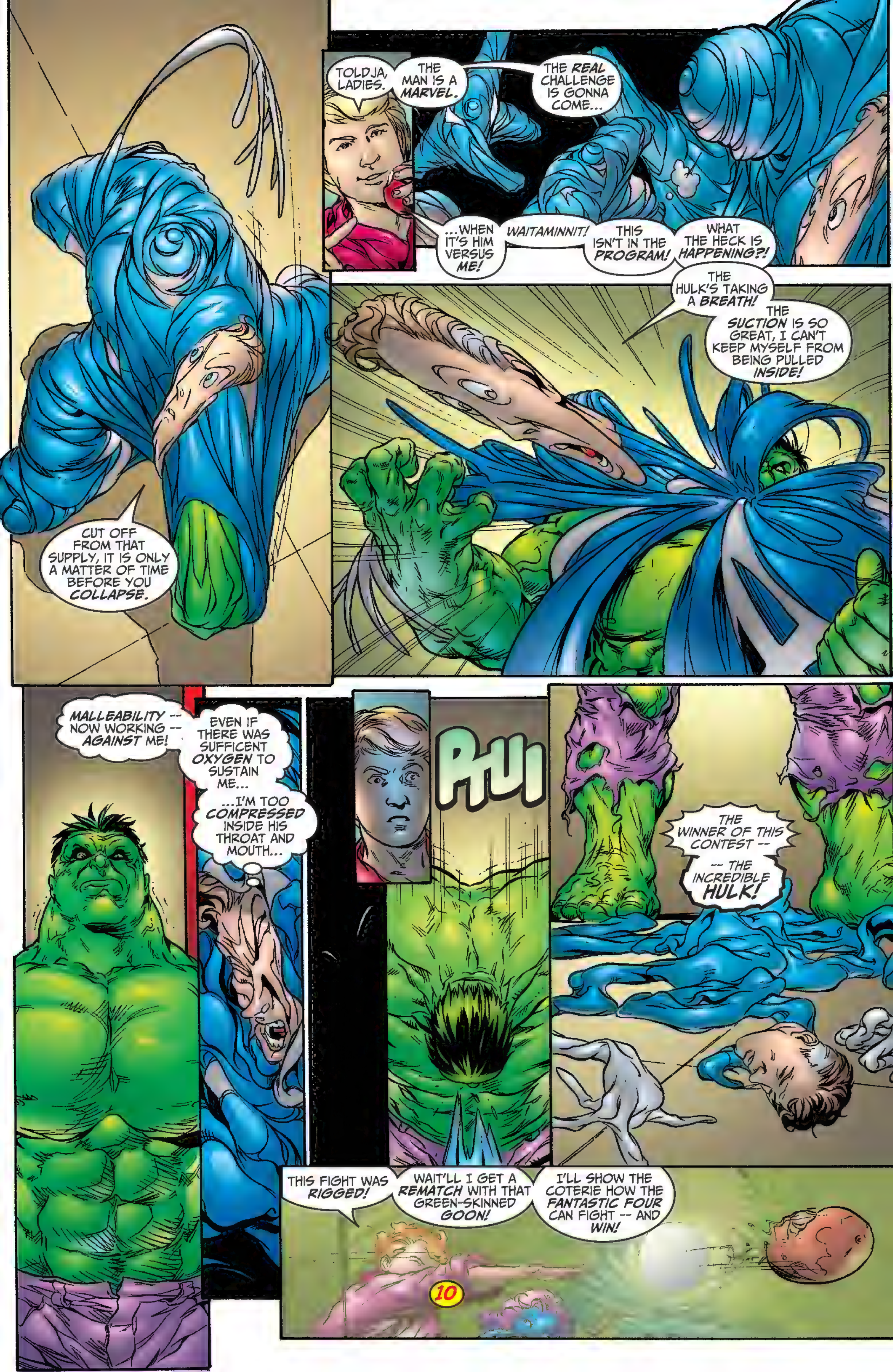

YOU'VE GOT THE MOVES DOWN COLD, SWEETHEART, AND THE SNAPPY PATTER AS WELL.
BUT THE ORIGINAL WALL-CRAWLER WOULD NEVER LET ME BOX HIM IN LIKE THAT, OR GIVE ME TIME TO NAIL HIM.
YOU'RE OFF TO A GOOD START, SPIDER-WOMAN...
...BUT YOU'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE YOU'RE IN SPIDEY'S LEAGUE -- OR MINE.
THING IS, SHE SOUNDED REALLY SCARED AT THE END.
ALMOST MADE ME THINK TWICE ABOUT DROPPING THE HAMMER.
A NEW-JACK LIKE HER, WITHOUT MUCH FIGHTING EXPERIENCE...
...IT'S PROBABLY BEST TO TAKE HER OFF THE GAME BOARD EARLY, BEFORE SHE GETS HERSELF HURT.
AS STIPULATED IN THE RULES...
...THE LOSERS OF EACH BOUT ARE RETURNED TO THEIR POINT OF ORIGIN...
...AS HALE AND HEARTY AS WHEN THEY WERE FIRST SUMMONED.
FAREWELL SPIDER-WOMAN!
YOU FOUGHT BRAVELY.
BUT THE HUMAN TORCH FOUGHT BETTER!
TO THE WINNER, THE SPOILS OF VICTORY!
AND THE RIGHT TO ADVANCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF COMBAT!
REMEMBER, FIGHT FANS, IN THE END...
...ONLY THE FINEST OF EARTH'S HEROES WILL SURVIVE!
TO THEM WILL GO THE ULTIMATE ACCOLADE:
A PRIZE UNIQUE IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE!
WILL JOHNNY STORM BE AMONG THAT FATEFUL NUMBER?
COUNT ON IT, BABE!

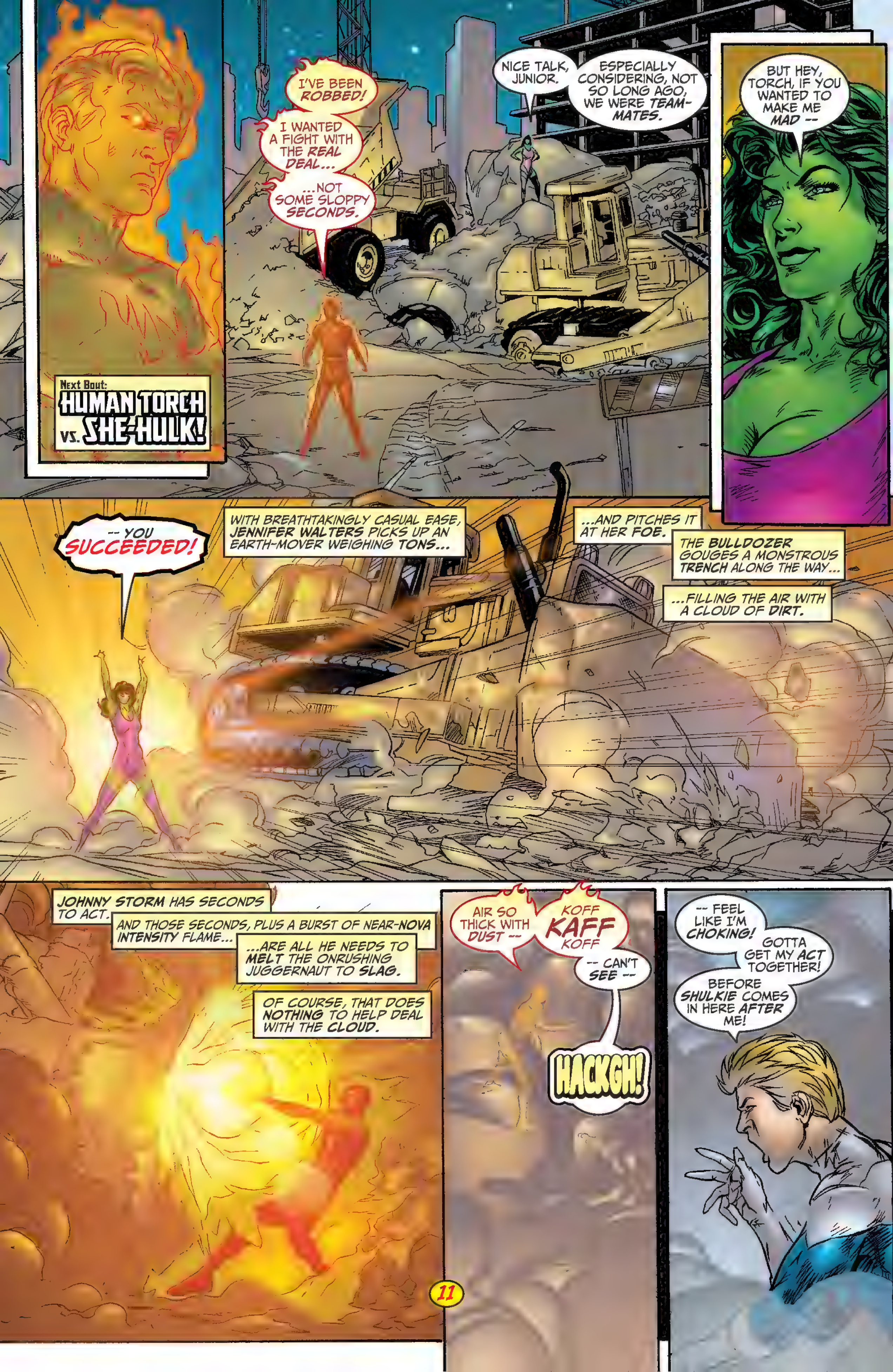

ELSEWHERE...
IRON MAN.
WHAT WAS THAT?
I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD SOMETHING.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE NATURE OF THIS BIO-SYSTEM IS SO ALIEN MY SENSORS CAN'T GET ACCURATE READINGS.
THEY HAVE NO ADEQUATE FRAME OF REFERENCE TO WORK FROM.
I'M INPUTTING TREMENDOUS AMOUNTS OF RAW DATA BUT I'VE NO EFFECTIVE MEANS TO COLLATE IT.
IT'S THE FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENT OF TRYING TO TRANSLATE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WITHOUT A ROSETTA STONE.
THE ONLY SURETIES RIGHT NOW ARE AN OXYGEN-NITROGEN ATMOSPHERE CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING TERRESTRIAL LIFE...
...AND THE OVERALL PRESUMPTION THAT THE ENVIRONMENT ITSELF IS HOSTILE.
THE COTERIE CLAIM TO SEND THE LOSERS OF EACH MATCH HOME...
...BUT I ENDED UP HERE.
LOGIC DICTATES I'M NOT ALONE.
TELEMETRY INDICATES A SHORT-RANGE TELEPORT.
BUT IF I'M STILL INSIDE THE COTERIE'S STARSHIP...
...THEN THAT VESSEL ITSELF MUST BE HUGE!
THIS PLACE IS A MASS OF CONTRADICTIONS.
I HAVE INDICATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY...
YET THE BULK OF MY SURROUNDINGS ARE WHOLLY ORGANIC.
NO SENSE OF OVERALL SIZE OR SHAPE, I CAN'T GET A RETURN FROM MY RADAR PULSE, AND THE MIST LIMITS MY SIGHT.
CONTACT!
IDENTITY: UNKNOWN.
DESIGNATION: UNKNOWN.
STATUS: UNKNOWN.
RANGE: 250 KMs.
BEARING: 217° RELATIVE.
A NEW ARRIVAL.
I WONDER WHO?
THERE'S THAT SOUND AGAIN!
IT MUST HAVE SOME NATURAL STEALTH CAPABILITY.
MY SENSORS CAN'T GET A LOCK ON ITS POSITION.

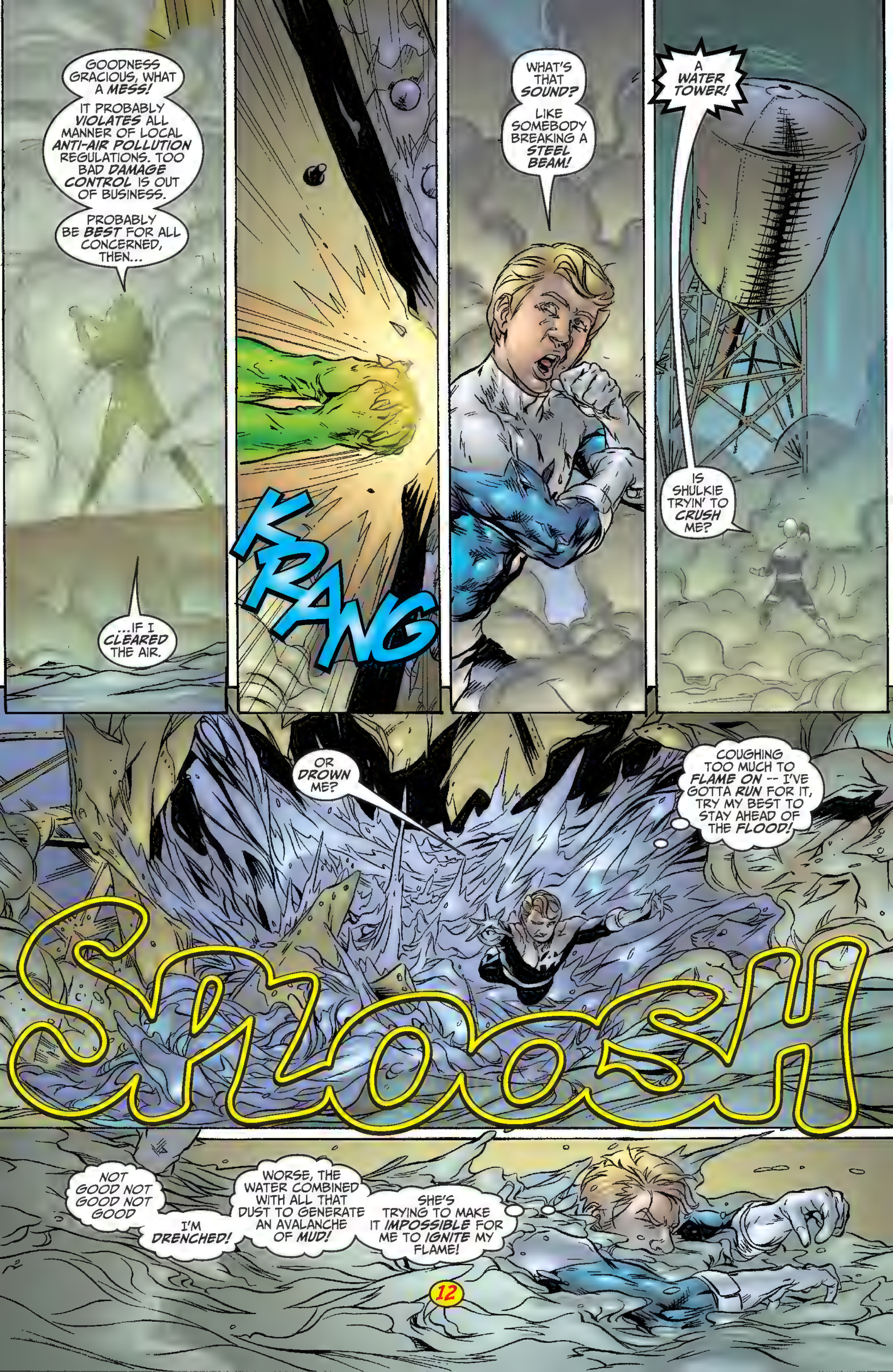

GOOD LORD!
SOME KIND OF LOCAL PREDATORS --
--HUNTING IN A PACK!
ZAM
LET'S SEE HOW THEY LIKE A BLAST OF REPULSOR RAYS!
THAT'S ONE!
POW
AND THAT'S HIS PARTNER!
NASTY LITTLE BEGGARS.
BOTH CLAWS AND FANGS APPEAR TO EXUDE A KIND OF ACID -- !
ANOTHER ONE!
WHAM
WHAT A HIT!
MY INTERNAL COMPENSATORS -- BARELY HANDLED THE SHOCK!
SYSTEMS RESPONSE -- AS SLUGGISH AS MY OWN!
"DON'T KNOW IF I'LL BE ABLE TO PARRY ITS NEXT ATTACK --
"-- OR TO WITHSTAND IT!"

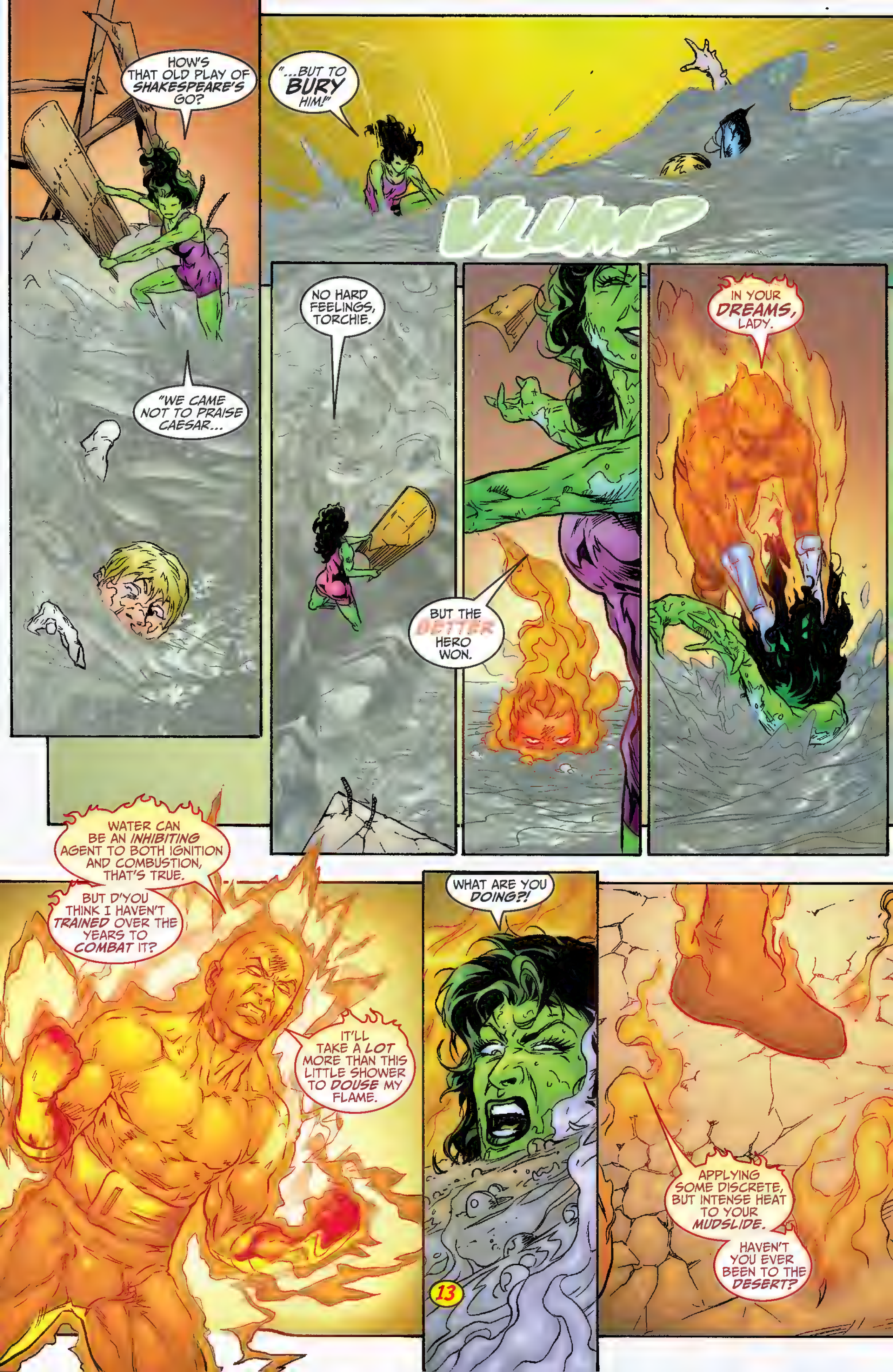

SORRY, *MONSTER!*
THE *TIN MAN* ISN'T ON TONIGHT'S *MENU!*
DID THAT *HURT?*
WHAT'S THE MATTER, CREATURE?
D'YOU FIGURE *AGONY* IS SOMETHING YOU'D RATHER *GIVE* THAN RECEIVE?
GET *USED* TO IT.
YOU WANT ME *DEAD?*
YOU'LL HAVE TO *CHOKE* ON MY *SPEAR* FIRST!
IN THE *FLESH!*
AS I RECALL, OUR BATTLE IN THE ARENA WAS TO THE *DEATH!*
THAT *WON'T* BE NECESSARY.
ZAM
PSYLOCKE?!
EVER THE *KNIGHT* IN SHINGING ARMOR, EH, *AVENGER?*
I SAY WE *FINISH* WHAT WE STARTED!
8

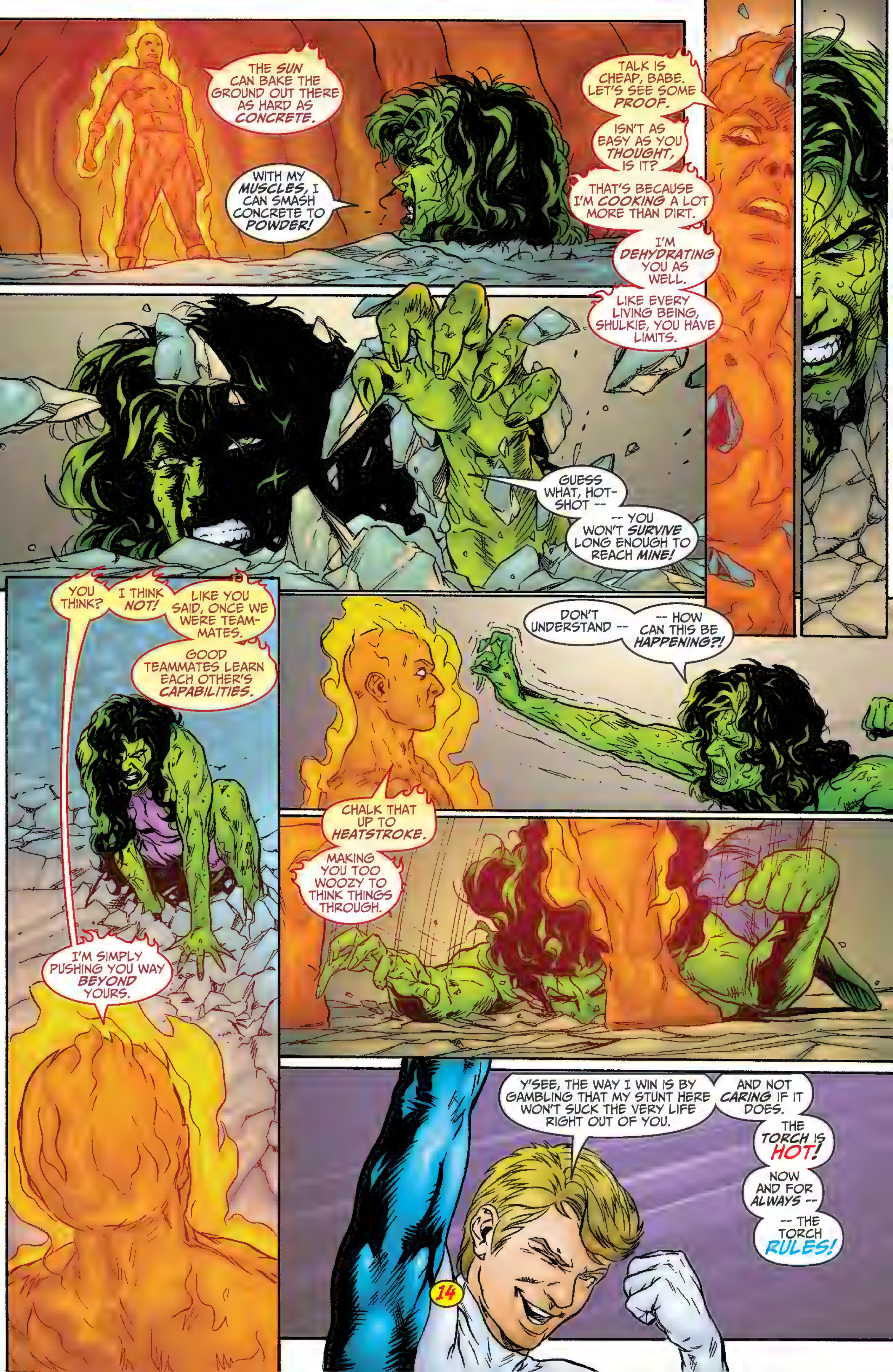

Next Bout:
MR. FANTASTIC vs. The Incredible HULK!
THIS IS IT! THE READER'S CHOICE BATTLE WHERE YOU DECIDED THE WINNER! SEE WWW.MARVEL.COM FOR MORE DETAILS!
NO CONTEST!
REED'S GOT POWERS AND BRAINS.
HULK'S SO OUTCLASSED, IT'S ALMOST EMBARRASSING!
I MEAN, TAKE AWAY HIS MUSCLES AND WHAT'S HE GOT TO FALL BACK ON?
HIS SPARKLING PERSONALITY?
HULK SMASH!
SO YOU'VE SAID, OFTEN.
BUT TO SMASH SOMETHING, YOU MUST FIRST MAKE SOLID CONTACT!
MY EXTENSIBLE FORM DENIES YOU THAT OPPORTUNITY.
I CAN SIMPLY BEND AWAY FROM ANY BLOW.
THEN HULK WILL STRETCH STRING MAN UNTIL HE BREAKS!
EVEN ASSUMING THERE IS AN UPPER LIMIT TO MY TENSILE ABILITY...
...BETTER, I THINK, TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE.
FOR ALL YOUR AWESOME MIGHT, HULK, YOU ARE STILL A LIVING BEING.
YOU REQUIRE AIR TO BREATHE.

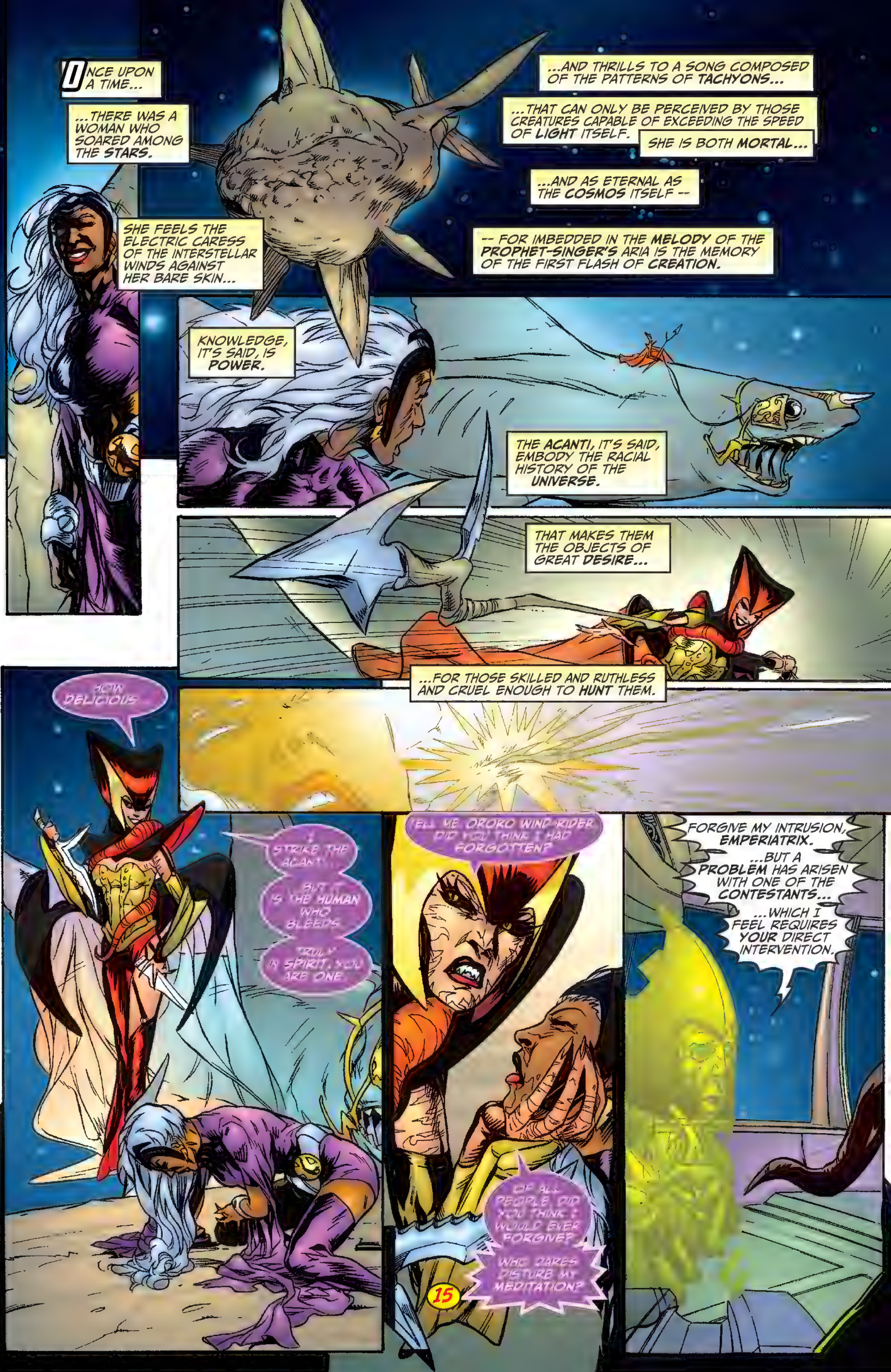

CUT OFF FROM THAT SUPPLY, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU *COLLAPSE*.
TOLDJA, LADIES.
THE MAN IS A *MARVEL*.
THE *REAL* CHALLENGE IS GONNA COME...
...WHEN IT'S HIM VERSUS *ME!*
WAITAMINNIT!
THIS ISN'T IN THE *PROGRAM!*
WHAT THE HECK IS *HAPPENING?!*
THE HULK'S TAKING A *BREATH!*
THE *SUCTION* IS SO GREAT, I CAN'T KEEP MYSELF FROM BEING PULLED *INSIDE!*
MALLEABILITY -- NOW WORKING -- *AGAINST* ME!
EVEN IF THERE WAS SUFFICENT *OXYGEN* TO SUSTAIN ME...
...I'M TOO *COMPRESSED* INSIDE HIS THROAT AND MOUTH...
PTUI
THE WINNER OF THIS CONTEST --
-- THE INCREDIBLE *HULK!*
THIS FIGHT WAS *RIGGED!*
WAIT'LL I GET A *REMATCH* WITH THAT GREEN-SKINNED *GOON!*
I'LL SHOW THE COTERIE HOW THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* CAN FIGHT -- AND *WIN!*
10

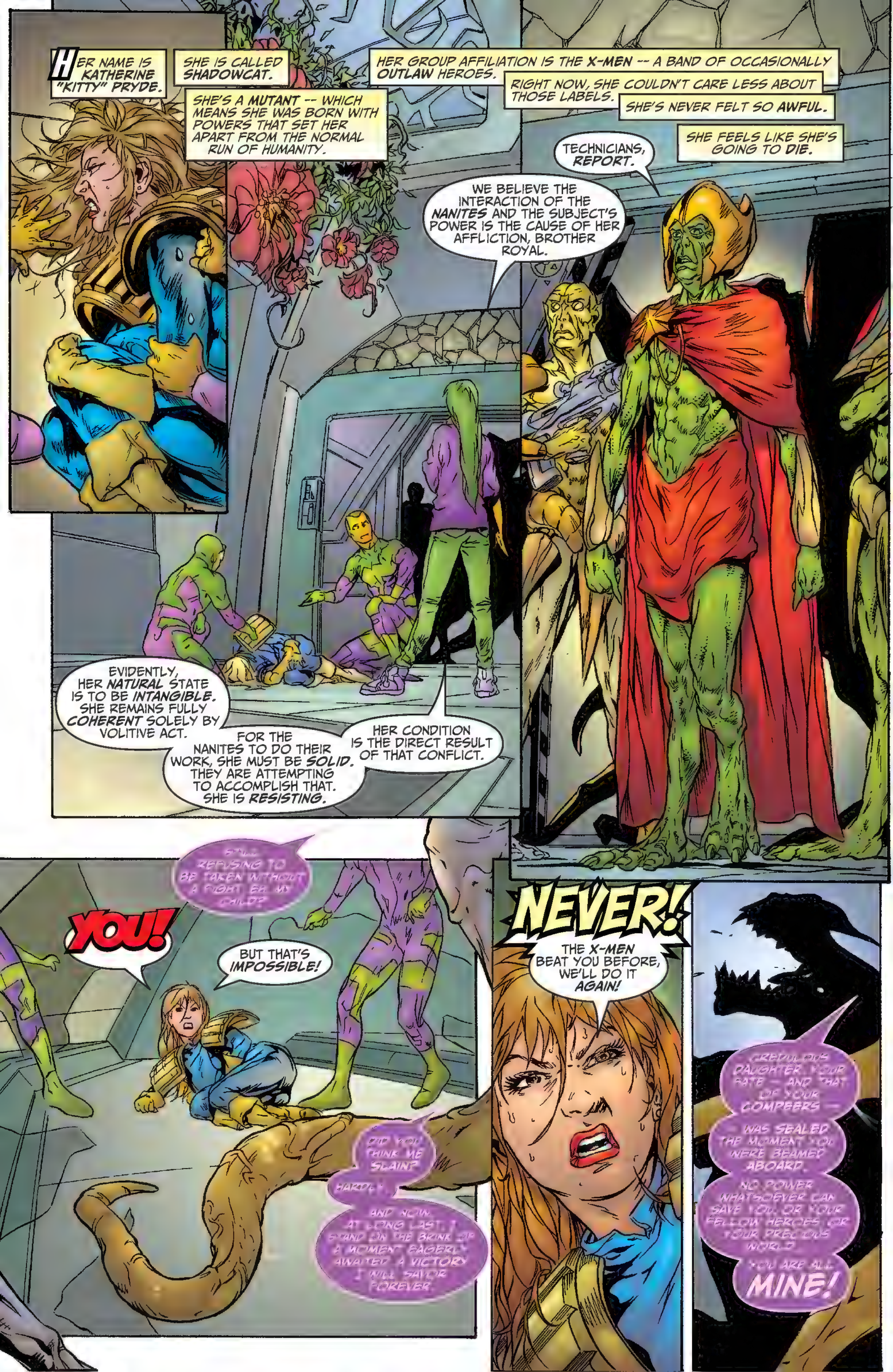

Next Bout: HUMAN TORCH VS. SHE-HULK!
I'VE BEEN ROBBED!
I WANTED A FIGHT WITH THE REAL DEAL...
...NOT SOME SLOPPY SECONDS.
NICE TALK, JUNIOR.
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING, NOT SO LONG AGO, WE WERE TEAM-MATES.
BUT HEY, TORCH, IF YOU WANTED TO MAKE ME MAD --
-- YOU SUCCEEDED!
WITH BREATHTAKINGLY CASUAL EASE, JENNIFER WALTERS PICKS UP AN EARTH-MOVER WEIGHING TONS...
...AND PITCHES IT AT HER FOE.
THE BULLDOZER GOUGES A MONSTROUS TRENCH ALONG THE WAY...
...FILLING THE AIR WITH A CLOUD OF DIRT.
JOHNNY STORM HAS SECONDS TO ACT.
AND THOSE SECONDS, PLUS A BURST OF NEAR-NOVA INTENSITY FLAME...
...ARE ALL HE NEEDS TO MELT THE ONRUSHING JUGGERNAUT TO SLAG.
OF COURSE, THAT DOES NOTHING TO HELP DEAL WITH THE CLOUD.
AIR SO THICK WITH DUST --
KOFF KAFF KOFF
-- CAN'T SEE --
HACKGH!
-- FEEL LIKE I'M CHOKING!
GOTTA GET MY ACT TOGETHER!
BEFORE SHULKIE COMES IN HERE AFTER ME!

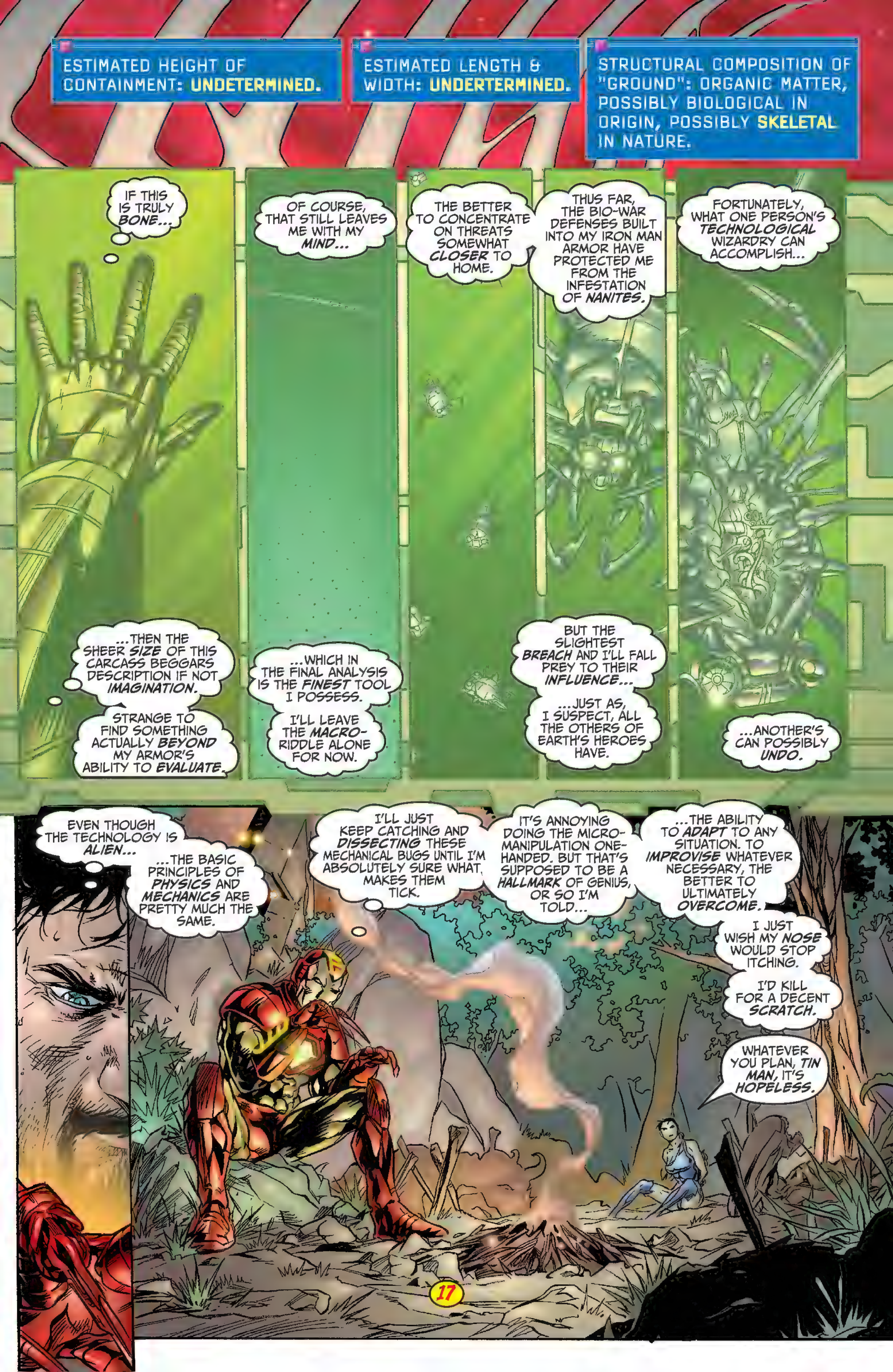

GOODNESS GRACIOUS, WHAT A *MESS!*
IT PROBABLY *VIOLATES* ALL MANNER OF LOCAL *ANTI-AIR POLLUTION* REGULATIONS. TOO BAD *DAMAGE CONTROL* IS OUT OF BUSINESS.
PROBABLY BE *BEST* FOR ALL CONCERNED, THEN...
...IF I *CLEARED* THE AIR.
KRANG
WHAT'S THAT *SOUND?*
LIKE SOMEBODY BREAKING A *STEEL BEAM!*
A *WATER TOWER!*
IS SHULKIE TRYIN' TO *CRUSH* ME?
OR *DROWN* ME?
COUGHING TOO MUCH TO *FLAME ON* -- I'VE GOTTA *RUN* FOR IT, TRY MY BEST TO STAY AHEAD OF THE *FLOOD!*
SPLOOSH
NOT GOOD NOT GOOD NOT GOOD
I'M *DRENCHED!*
WORSE, THE WATER COMBINED WITH ALL THAT DUST TO GENERATE AN AVALANCHE OF *MUD!*
SHE'S TRYING TO MAKE IT *IMPOSSIBLE* FOR ME TO *IGNITE* MY FLAME!

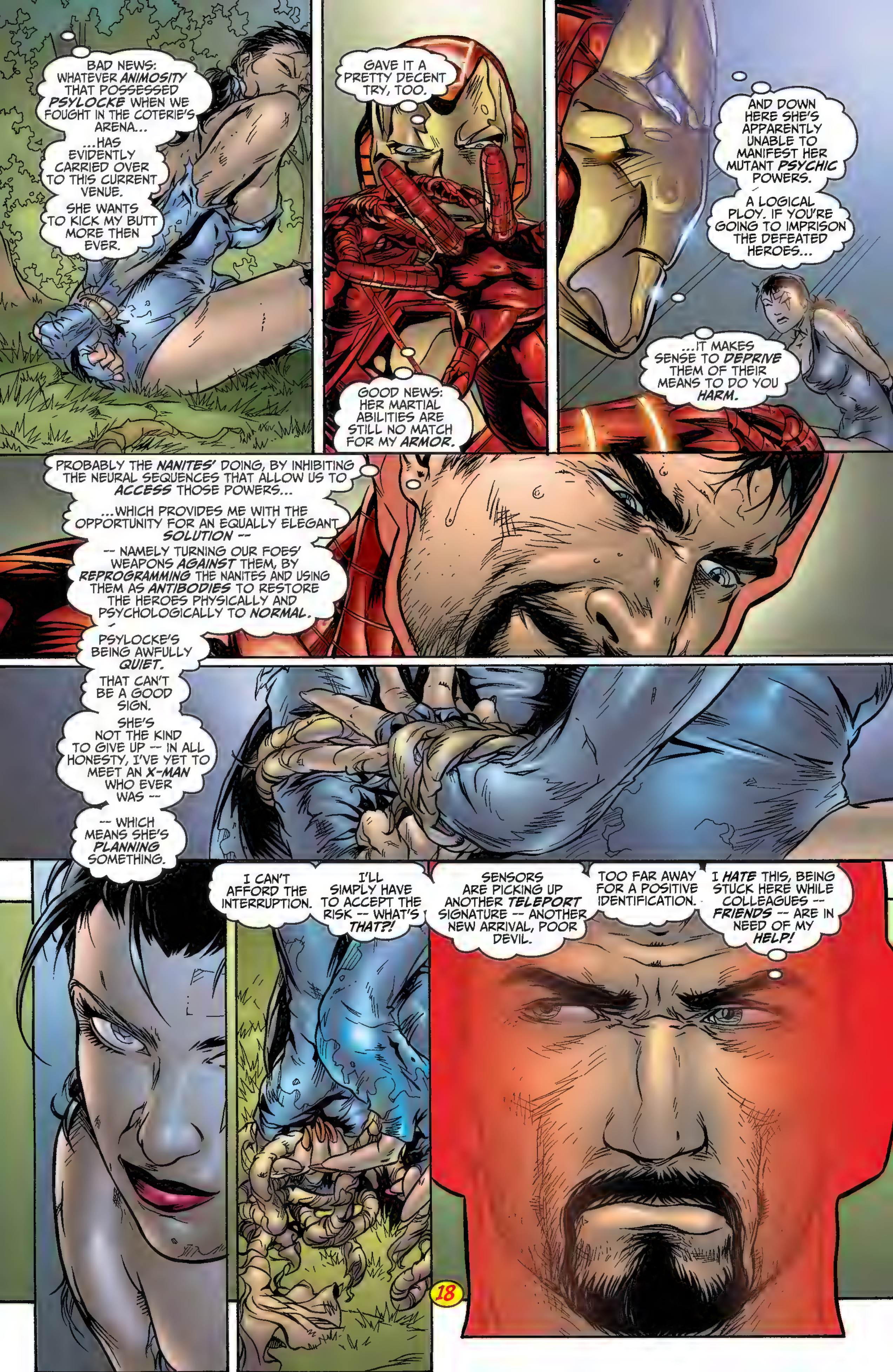

HOW'S THAT OLD PLAY OF *SHAKESPEARE'S* GO?
"WE CAME NOT TO PRAISE CAESAR...
"...BUT TO **BURY** HIM!"
VLUMP
NO HARD FEELINGS, TORCHIE.
BUT THE *BETTER* HERO WON.
IN YOUR *DREAMS,* LADY.
WATER CAN BE AN *INHIBITING* AGENT TO BOTH IGNITION AND COMBUSTION, THAT'S TRUE.
BUT D'YOU THINK I HAVEN'T *TRAINED* OVER THE YEARS TO *COMBAT* IT?
IT'LL TAKE A *LOT* MORE THAN THIS LITTLE SHOWER TO *DOUSE* MY FLAME.
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!*
APPLYING SOME DISCRETE, BUT INTENSE HEAT TO YOUR *MUDSLIDE*.
HAVEN'T YOU EVER BEEN TO THE *DESERT?*

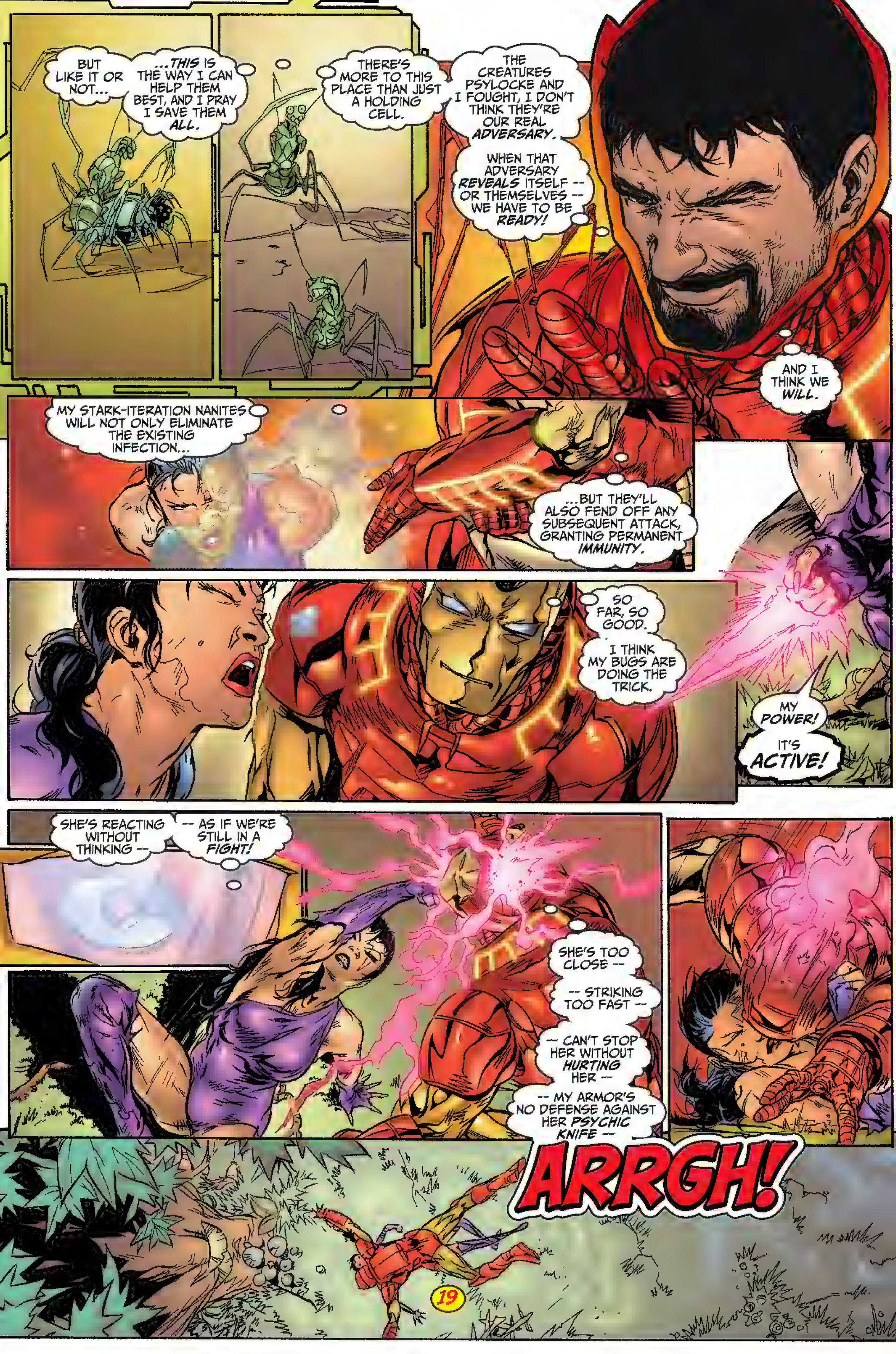

THE SUN CAN BAKE THE GROUND OUT THERE AS HARD AS CONCRETE.
WITH MY MUSCLES, I CAN SMASH CONCRETE TO POWDER!
TALK IS CHEAP, BABE. LET'S SEE SOME PROOF.
ISN'T AS EASY AS YOU THOUGHT, IS IT?
THAT'S BECAUSE I'M COOKING A LOT MORE THAN DIRT.
I'M DEHYDRATING YOU AS WELL.
LIKE EVERY LIVING BEING, SHULKIE, YOU HAVE LIMITS.
GUESS WHAT, HOT-SHOT --
-- YOU WON'T SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REACH MINE!
YOU THINK?
I THINK NOT!
LIKE YOU SAID, ONCE WE WERE TEAM-MATES.
GOOD TEAMMATES LEARN EACH OTHER'S CAPABILITIES.
I'M SIMPLY PUSHING YOU WAY BEYOND YOURS.
DON'T UNDERSTAND --
-- HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?!
CHALK THAT UP TO HEATSTROKE.
MAKING YOU TOO WOOZY TO THINK THINGS THROUGH.
Y'SEE, THE WAY I WIN IS BY GAMBLING THAT MY STUNT HERE WON'T SUCK THE VERY LIFE RIGHT OUT OF YOU.
AND NOT CARING IF IT DOES.
THE TORCH IS HOT!
NOW AND FOR ALWAYS --
-- THE TORCH RULES!

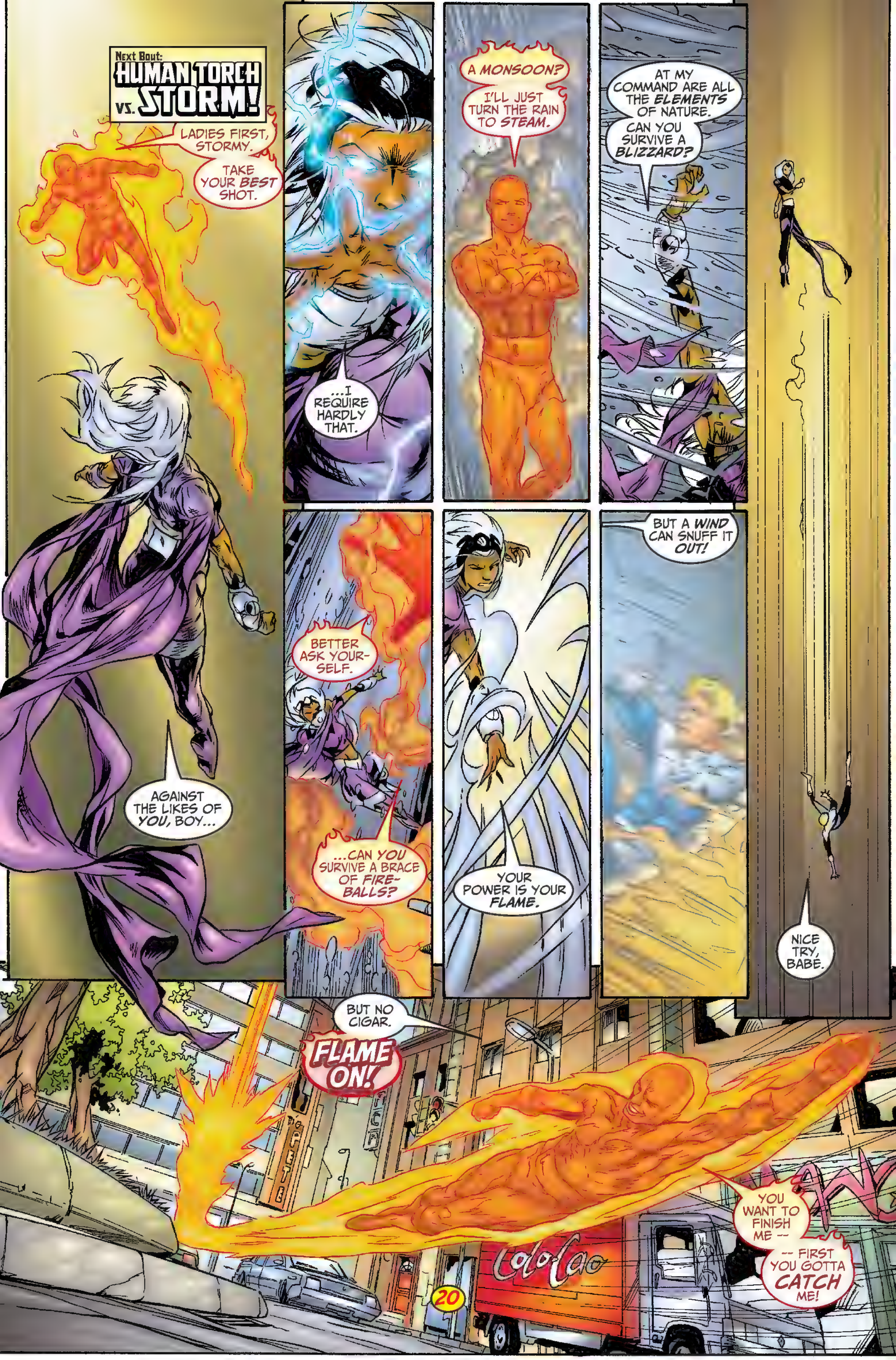

ONCE UPON A TIME...
...THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO SOARED AMONG THE STARS.
SHE FEELS THE ELECTRIC CARESS OF THE INTERSTELLAR WINDS AGAINST HER BARE SKIN...
...AND THRILLS TO A SONG COMPOSED OF THE PATTERNS OF TACHYONS...
...THAT CAN ONLY BE PERCEIVED BY THOSE CREATURES CAPABLE OF EXCEEDING THE SPEED OF LIGHT ITSELF.
SHE IS BOTH MORTAL...
...AND AS ETERNAL AS THE COSMOS ITSELF --
-- FOR IMBEDDED IN THE MELODY OF THE PROPHET-SINGER'S ARIA IS THE MEMORY OF THE FIRST FLASH OF CREATION.
KNOWLEDGE, IT'S SAID, IS POWER.
THE ACANTI, IT'S SAID, EMBODY THE RACIAL HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE.
THAT MAKES THEM THE OBJECTS OF GREAT DESIRE...
...FOR THOSE SKILLED AND RUTHLESS AND CRUEL ENOUGH TO HUNT THEM.
HOW DELICIOUS.
I STRIKE THE ACANTI...
BUT IT IS THE HUMAN WHO BLEEDS.
TRULY IN SPIRIT, YOU ARE ONE.
TELL ME, ORORO WIND-RIDER, DID YOU THINK I HAD FORGOTTEN?
OF ALL PEOPLE, DID YOU THINK I WOULD EVER FORGIVE?
WHO DARES DISTURB MY MEDITATION?
FORGIVE MY INTRUSION, EMPERIATRIX.
...BUT A PROBLEM HAS ARISEN WITH ONE OF THE CONTESTANTS...
...WHICH I FEEL REQUIRES YOUR DIRECT INTERVENTION.

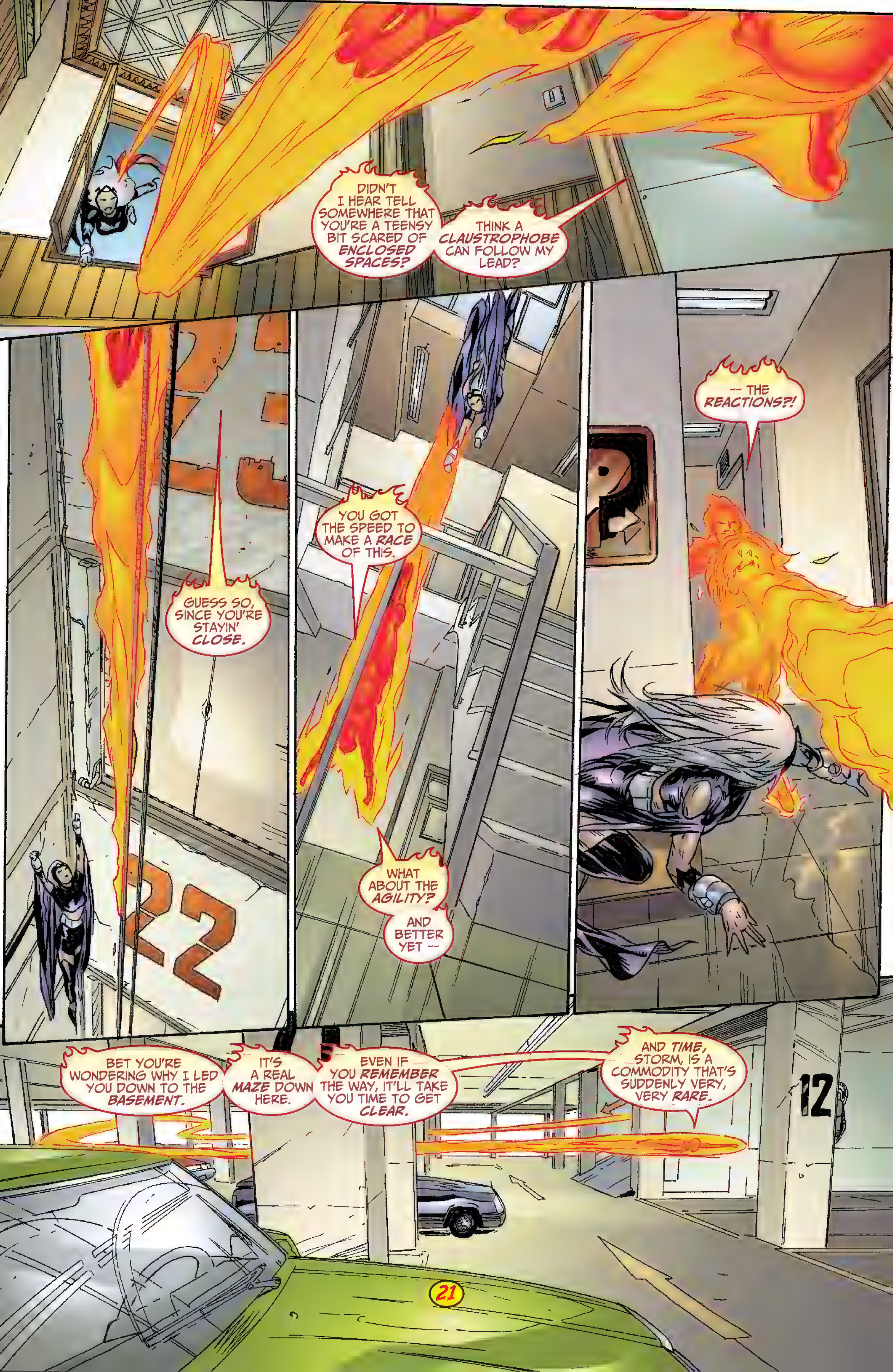

HER NAME IS KATHERINE "KITTY" PRYDE.
SHE IS CALLED SHADOWCAT.
SHE'S A MUTANT -- WHICH MEANS SHE WAS BORN WITH POWERS THAT SET HER APART FROM THE NORMAL RUN OF HUMANITY.
HER GROUP AFFILIATION IS THE X-MEN -- A BAND OF OCCASIONALLY OUTLAW HEROES.
RIGHT NOW, SHE COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT THOSE LABELS.
SHE'S NEVER FELT SO AWFUL.
SHE FEELS LIKE SHE'S GOING TO DIE.
TECHNICIANS, REPORT.
WE BELIEVE THE INTERACTION OF THE NANITES AND THE SUBJECT'S POWER IS THE CAUSE OF HER AFFLICTION, BROTHER ROYAL.
EVIDENTLY, HER NATURAL STATE IS TO BE INTANGIBLE. SHE REMAINS FULLY COHERENT SOLELY BY VOLITIVE ACT.
FOR THE NANITES TO DO THEIR WORK, SHE MUST BE SOLID. THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO ACCOMPLISH THAT. SHE IS RESISTING.
HER CONDITION IS THE DIRECT RESULT OF THAT CONFLICT.
STILL REFUSING TO BE TAKEN WITHOUT A FIGHT, EH, MY CHILD?
YOU!
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
DID YOU THINK ME SLAIN?
HARDLY.
AND NOW, AT LONG LAST, I STAND ON THE BRINK OF A MOMENT EAGERLY AWAITED. A VICTORY I WILL SAVOR FOREVER.
NEVER!
THE X-MEN BEAT YOU BEFORE, WE'LL DO IT AGAIN!
CREDULOUS DAUGHTER, YOUR FATE -- AND THAT OF YOUR COMPEERS --
-- WAS SEALED THE MOMENT YOU WERE BEAMED ABOARD.
NO POWER WHATSOEVER CAN SAVE YOU, OR YOUR FELLOW HEROES, OR YOUR PRECIOUS WORLD.
YOU ARE ALL MINE!

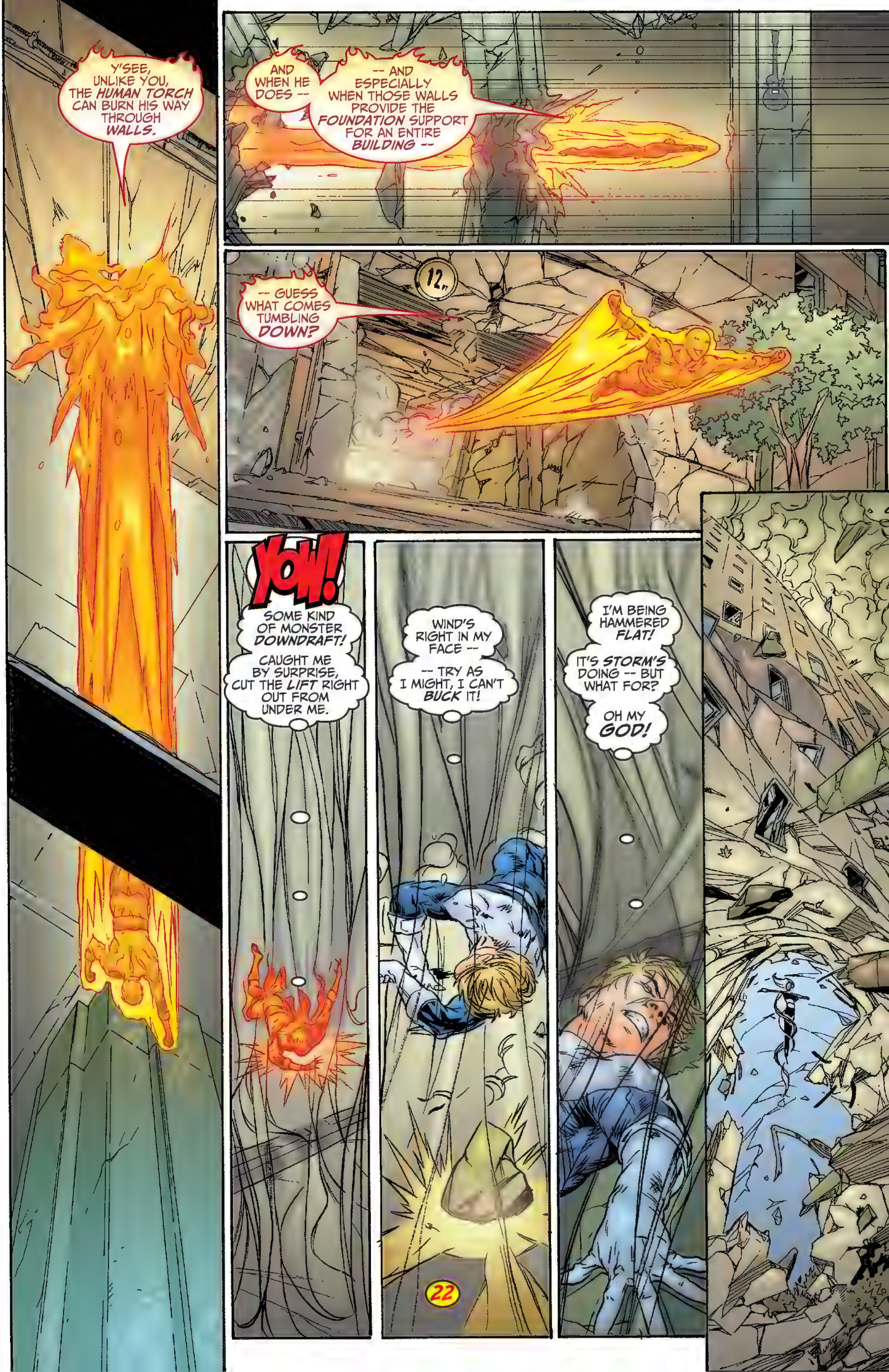

ESTIMATED HEIGHT OF CONTAINMENT: UNDETERMINED.
ESTIMATED LENGTH & WIDTH: UNDERTERMINED.
STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION OF "GROUND": ORGANIC MATTER, POSSIBLY BIOLOGICAL IN ORIGIN, POSSIBLY SKELETAL IN NATURE.
IF THIS IS TRULY *BONE*...
...THEN THE SHEER *SIZE* OF THIS CARCASS BEGGARS DESCRIPTION IF NOT *IMAGINATION*.
STRANGE TO FIND SOMETHING ACTUALLY *BEYOND* MY ARMOR'S ABILITY TO *EVALUATE*.
OF COURSE, THAT STILL LEAVES ME WITH MY *MIND*...
...WHICH IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IS THE *FINEST* TOOL I POSSESS.
I'LL LEAVE THE *MACRO*-RIDDLE ALONE FOR NOW.
THE BETTER TO CONCENTRATE ON THREATS SOMEWHAT *CLOSER* TO HOME.
THUS FAR, THE BIO-WAR DEFENSES BUILT INTO MY IRON MAN ARMOR HAVE PROTECTED ME FROM THE INFESTATION OF *NANITES*.
BUT THE SLIGHTEST *BREACH* AND I'LL FALL PREY TO THEIR *INFLUENCE*...
...JUST AS, I SUSPECT, ALL THE OTHERS OF EARTH'S HEROES HAVE.
FORTUNATELY, WHAT ONE PERSON'S *TECHNOLOGICAL* WIZARDRY CAN ACCOMPLISH...
...ANOTHER'S CAN POSSIBLY *UNDO*.
EVEN THOUGH THE TECHNOLOGY IS *ALIEN*...
...THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF *PHYSICS* AND *MECHANICS* ARE PRETTY MUCH THE SAME.
I'LL JUST KEEP CATCHING AND *DISSECTING* THESE MECHANICAL BUGS UNTIL I'M ABSOLUTELY SURE WHAT MAKES THEM TICK.
IT'S ANNOYING DOING THE MICRO-MANIPULATION ONE-HANDED. BUT THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A *HALLMARK* OF GENIUS, OR SO I'M TOLD...
...THE ABILITY TO *ADAPT* TO ANY SITUATION. TO *IMPROVISE* WHATEVER NECESSARY, THE BETTER TO ULTIMATELY *OVERCOME*.
I JUST WISH MY *NOSE* WOULD STOP ITCHING.
I'D KILL FOR A DECENT *SCRATCH*.
WHATEVER YOU PLAN, *TIN MAN*, IT'S *HOPELESS*.

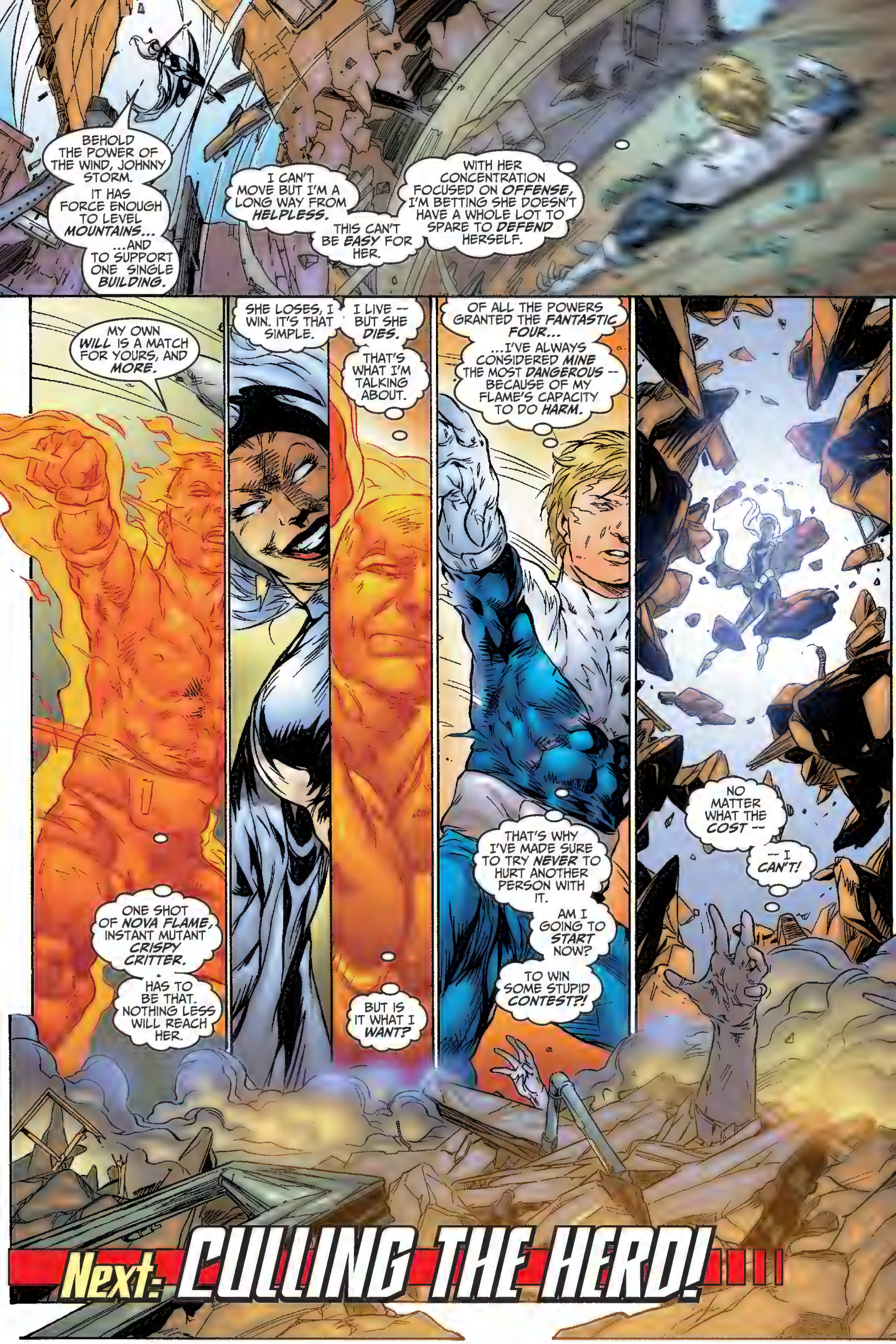

BAD NEWS: WHATEVER *ANIMOSITY* THAT POSSESSED *PSYLOCKE* WHEN WE FOUGHT IN THE COTERIE'S ARENA...
...HAS EVIDENTLY CARRIED OVER TO THIS CURRENT VENUE.
SHE WANTS TO KICK MY BUTT MORE THEN EVER.
GAVE IT A PRETTY DECENT TRY, TOO.
GOOD NEWS: HER MARTIAL ABILITIES ARE STILL NO MATCH FOR MY *ARMOR*.
AND DOWN HERE SHE'S APPARENTLY UNABLE TO MANIFEST HER MUTANT *PSYCHIC* POWERS.
A LOGICAL PLOY. IF YOU'RE GOING TO IMPRISON THE DEFEATED HEROES...
...IT MAKES SENSE TO *DEPRIVE* THEM OF THEIR MEANS TO DO YOU *HARM*.
PROBABLY THE *NANITES'* DOING, BY INHIBITING THE NEURAL SEQUENCES THAT ALLOW US TO *ACCESS* THOSE POWERS...
...WHICH PROVIDES ME WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EQUALLY ELEGANT *SOLUTION* --
-- NAMELY TURNING OUR FOES' WEAPONS *AGAINST* THEM, BY *REPROGRAMMING* THE NANITES AND USING THEM AS *ANTIBODIES* TO RESTORE THE HEROES PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY TO *NORMAL*.
PSYLOCKE'S BEING AWFULLY *QUIET*.
THAT CAN'T BE A GOOD SIGN.
SHE'S NOT THE KIND TO GIVE UP -- IN ALL HONESTY, I'VE YET TO MEET AN *X-MAN* WHO EVER WAS --
-- WHICH MEANS SHE'S *PLANNING* SOMETHING.
I CAN'T AFFORD THE INTERRUPTION.
I'LL SIMPLY HAVE TO ACCEPT THE RISK -- WHAT'S *THAT?!*
SENSORS ARE PICKING UP ANOTHER *TELEPORT* SIGNATURE -- ANOTHER NEW ARRIVAL, POOR DEVIL.
TOO FAR AWAY FOR A POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION.
I *HATE* THIS, BEING STUCK HERE WHILE COLLEAGUES -- *FRIENDS* -- ARE IN NEED OF MY *HELP!*


BUT LIKE IT OR NOT...
...THIS IS THE WAY I CAN HELP THEM BEST, AND I PRAY I SAVE THEM ALL.
THERE'S MORE TO THIS PLACE THAN JUST A HOLDING CELL.
THE CREATURES PSYLOCKE AND I FOUGHT, I DON'T THINK THEY'RE OUR REAL ADVERSARY.
WHEN THAT ADVERSARY REVEALS ITSELF -- OR THEMSELVES -- WE HAVE TO BE READY!
AND I THINK WE WILL.
MY STARK-ITERATION NANITES WILL NOT ONLY ELIMINATE THE EXISTING INFECTION...
...BUT THEY'LL ALSO FEND OFF ANY SUBSEQUENT ATTACK, GRANTING PERMANENT IMMUNITY.
SO FAR, SO GOOD.
I THINK MY BUGS ARE DOING THE TRICK.
MY POWER!
IT'S ACTIVE!
SHE'S REACTING WITHOUT THINKING --
-- AS IF WE'RE STILL IN A FIGHT!
SHE'S TOO CLOSE --
-- STRIKING TOO FAST --
-- CAN'T STOP HER WITHOUT HURTING HER --
-- MY ARMOR'S NO DEFENSE AGAINST HER PSYCHIC KNIFE --
ARRGH!


Next Bout:
HUMAN TORCH vs. STORM!
LADIES FIRST, STORMY.
TAKE YOUR *BEST* SHOT.
AGAINST THE LIKES OF *YOU*, BOY...
...I REQUIRE HARDLY THAT.
A MONSOON?
I'LL JUST TURN THE RAIN TO *STEAM*.
AT MY COMMAND ARE ALL THE *ELEMENTS* OF NATURE.
CAN YOU SURVIVE A *BLIZZARD?*
BETTER ASK YOURSELF.
...CAN *YOU* SURVIVE A BRACE OF *FIREBALLS?*
YOUR POWER IS YOUR *FLAME*.
BUT A *WIND* CAN SNUFF IT *OUT!*
NICE TRY, BABE.
BUT NO CIGAR.
FLAME ON!
YOU WANT TO FINISH ME --
-- FIRST YOU GOTTA *CATCH* ME!
Cola Cao


DIDN'T I HEAR TELL SOMEWHERE THAT YOU'RE A TEENSY BIT SCARED OF ENCLOSED SPACES?
THINK A CLAUSTROPHOBE CAN FOLLOW MY LEAD?
GUESS SO, SINCE YOU'RE STAYIN' CLOSE.
22
YOU GOT THE SPEED TO MAKE A RACE OF THIS.
WHAT ABOUT THE AGILITY?
AND BETTER YET --
-- THE REACTIONS?!
BET YOU'RE WONDERING WHY I LED YOU DOWN TO THE BASEMENT.
IT'S A REAL MAZE DOWN HERE.
EVEN IF YOU REMEMBER THE WAY, IT'LL TAKE YOU TIME TO GET CLEAR.
AND TIME, STORM, IS A COMMODITY THAT'S SUDDENLY VERY, VERY RARE.
12


Y'SEE, UNLIKE YOU, THE **HUMAN TORCH** CAN BURN HIS WAY THROUGH **WALLS.**
AND WHEN HE DOES --
-- AND ESPECIALLY WHEN THOSE WALLS PROVIDE THE **FOUNDATION** SUPPORT FOR AN ENTIRE **BUILDING** --
12
-- GUESS WHAT COMES TUMBLING **DOWN?**
YOW!
SOME KIND OF MONSTER **DOWNDRAFT!**
CAUGHT ME BY SURPRISE, CUT THE **LIFT** RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER ME.
WIND'S RIGHT IN MY FACE --
-- TRY AS I MIGHT, I CAN'T **BUCK** IT!
I'M BEING HAMMERED **FLAT!**
IT'S **STORM'S** DOING -- BUT WHAT FOR?
OH MY **GOD!**


BEHOLD THE POWER OF THE WIND, JOHNNY STORM.
IT HAS FORCE ENOUGH TO LEVEL *MOUNTAINS...*
...AND TO SUPPORT ONE SINGLE *BUILDING.*
I CAN'T MOVE BUT I'M A LONG WAY FROM *HELPLESS.*
THIS CAN'T BE *EASY* FOR HER.
WITH HER CONCENTRATION FOCUSED ON *OFFENSE,* I'M BETTING SHE DOESN'T HAVE A WHOLE LOT TO SPARE TO *DEFEND* HERSELF.
MY OWN *WILL* IS A MATCH FOR YOURS, AND *MORE.*
ONE SHOT OF *NOVA FLAME,* INSTANT MUTANT *CRISPY CRITTER.*
HAS TO BE THAT. NOTHING LESS WILL REACH HER.
SHE LOSES, I WIN. IT'S THAT SIMPLE.
I LIVE -- BUT SHE *DIES.*
THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
BUT IS IT WHAT I *WANT?*
OF ALL THE POWERS GRANTED THE *FANTASTIC FOUR...*
...I'VE ALWAYS CONSIDERED *MINE* THE MOST *DANGEROUS* -- BECAUSE OF MY FLAME'S CAPACITY TO DO *HARM.*
THAT'S WHY I'VE MADE SURE TO TRY *NEVER* TO HURT ANOTHER PERSON WITH IT.
AM I GOING TO *START* NOW?
TO WIN SOME STUPID *CONTEST?!*
NO MATTER WHAT THE *COST* --
-- I *CAN'T!*
Next: CULLING THE HERD!

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

VANGUARD

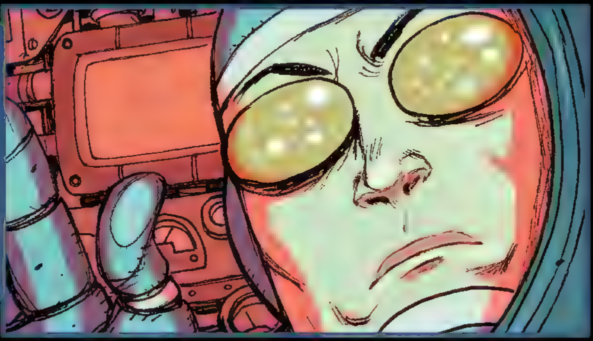
(CHAPTER 10 OF 12)

Trenton Craft is dead, and to the surprise of Detective Stacy Dolan, she killed him. With the help of a team of superpowered cover-ops agents, Dolan discovers how she was brainwashed by Jaafar Yoosuf, a man she put behind bars, into becoming an unwitting killer. But Yoosuf—mind-controling the Fantastic Four's Ben Grimm—reveals that Dolan is just a pawn in a far greater game...

MACHINE MAN

(CHAPTER 3 OF 5)

There are a lot of things that Aaron Stack, the hero known to the world as Machine Man, isn't very good with. Beer. Emotions. But most of all, Stack is TERRIBLE with women. And as Machine Man's psychologist is about to discover, one of Aaron's exes in particular is a real killer...



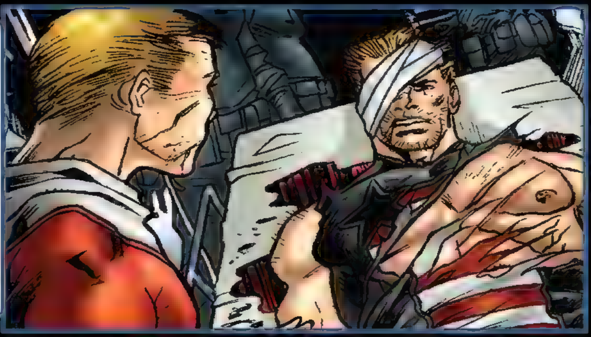
DEADPOOL

Wade Wilson should be dead. Dying of cancer, Wilson volunteered for an experimental treatment that gave him regenerative powers and superhuman reflexes, along with a face like a sidewalk. Now a killer for hire, Deadpool doesn't always makes the wisest career choices, especially when he's taking the advice of his deadbeat manager, Weasel...

WEAPON OMEGA

(CHAPTER 10 OF 12)

Omega Flight is a team divided. Michael Pointer, the super hero Guardian, has lost control of his mutant abilities and his teammate USAgent has paid the price. But the multitude of voices in his head tells Pointer that his actions are no longer his own...and that the person pulling his strings is far closer to him than he ever imagined...



Cover by: YANICK PAQUETTE with SERGE LAPOINTE and ROMAIN GASCHET

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Editor in Chief: JOE QUESADA
Publisher: DAN BUCKLEY

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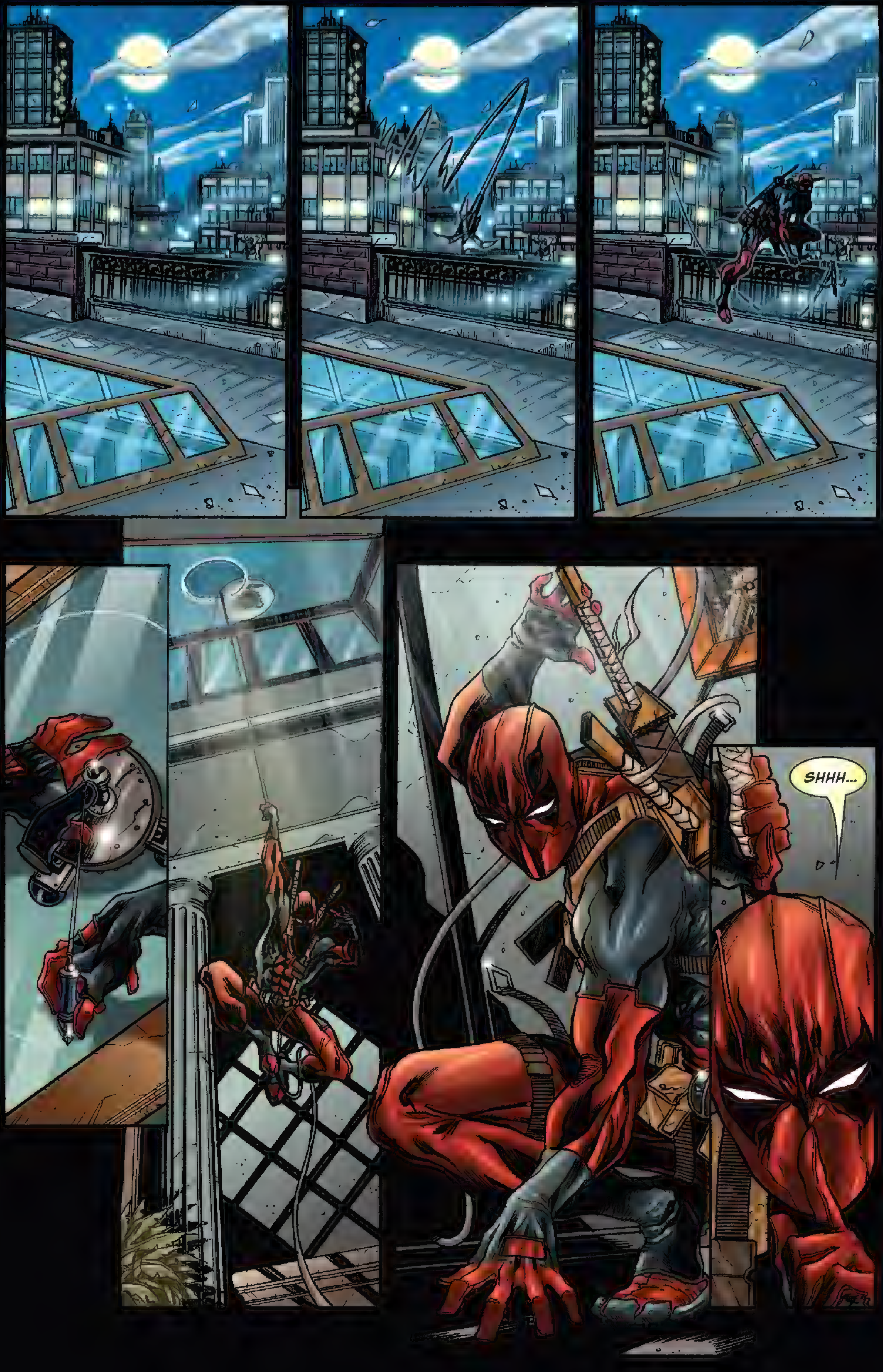
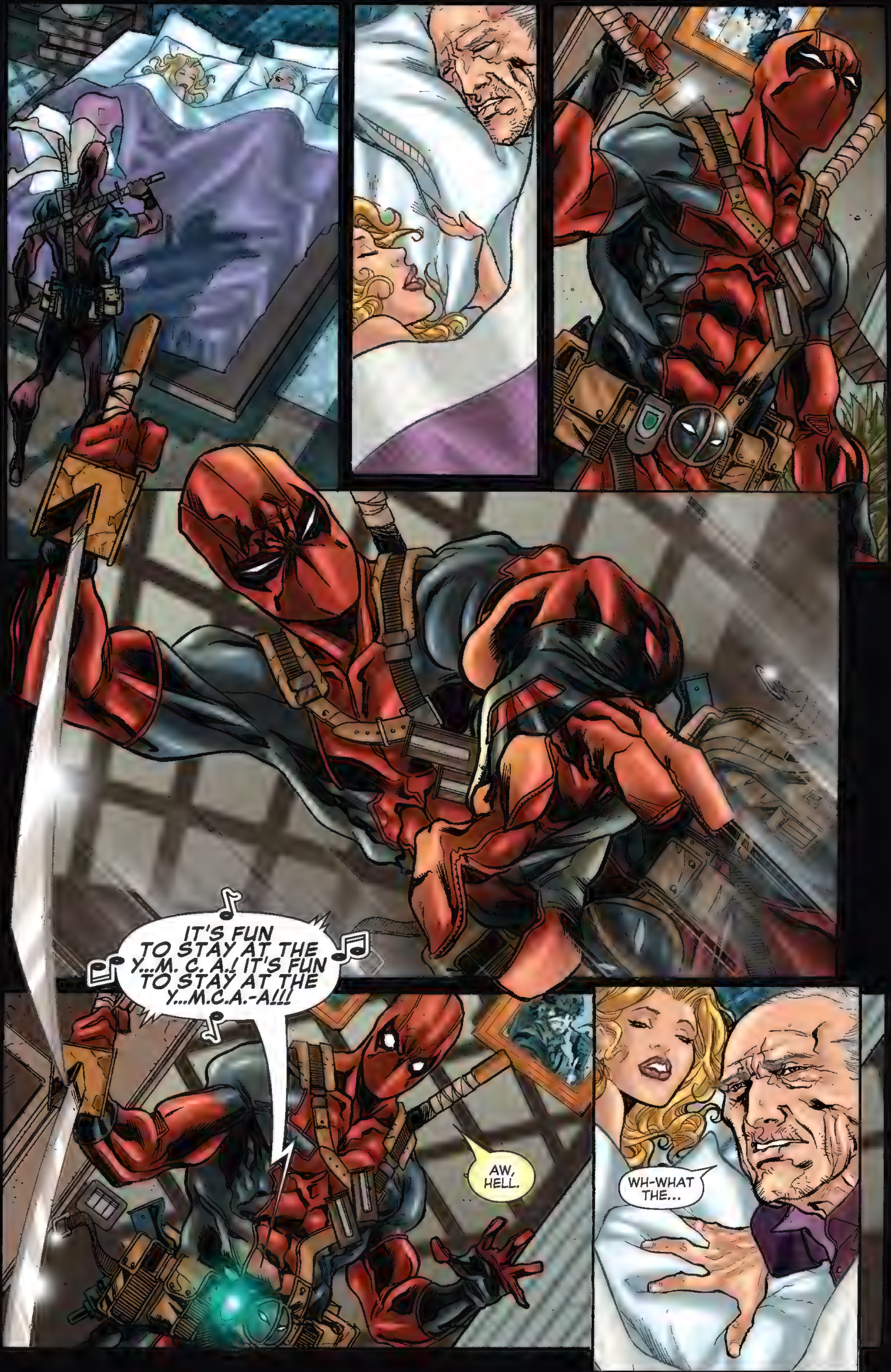
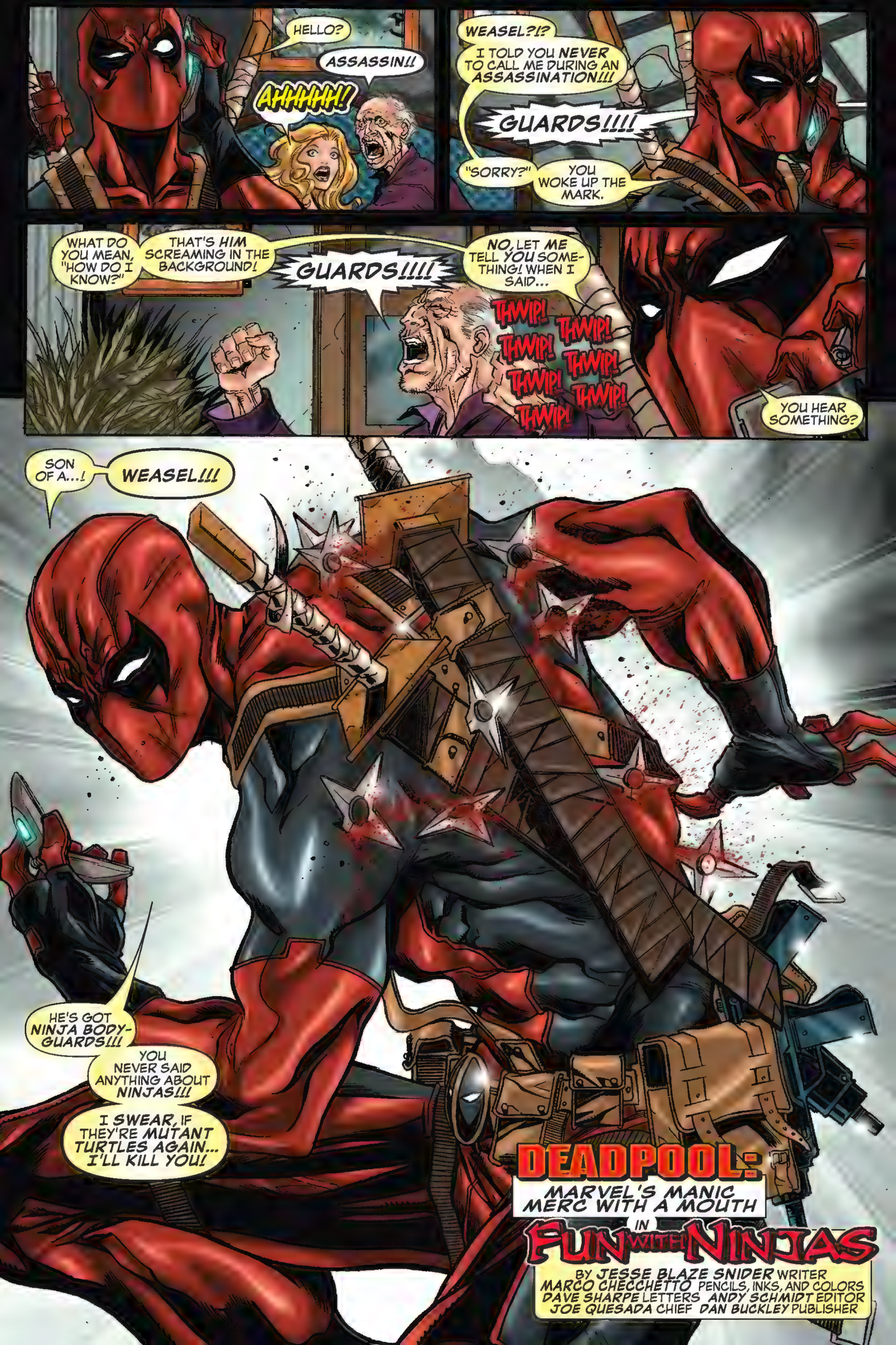
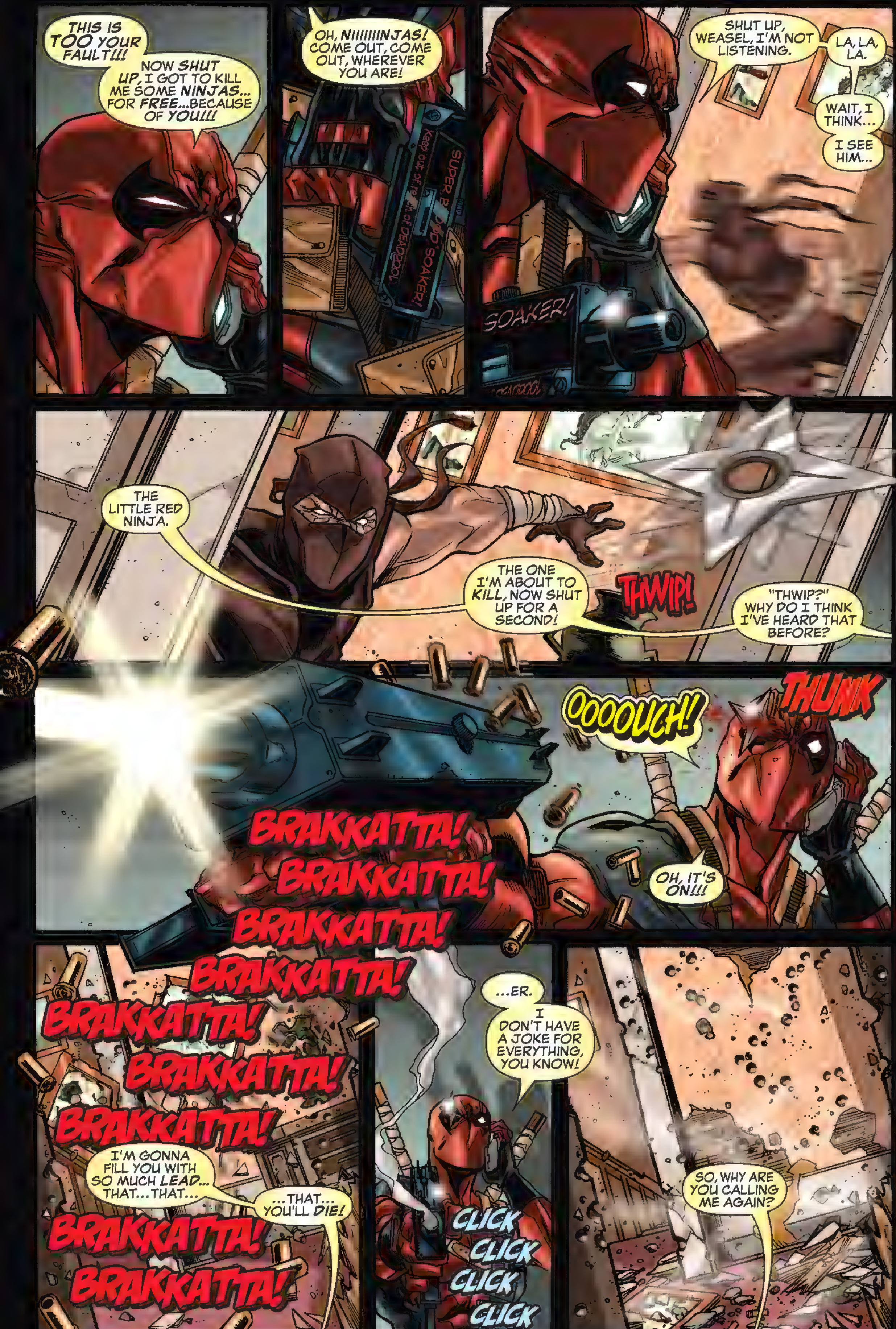

SHHH...

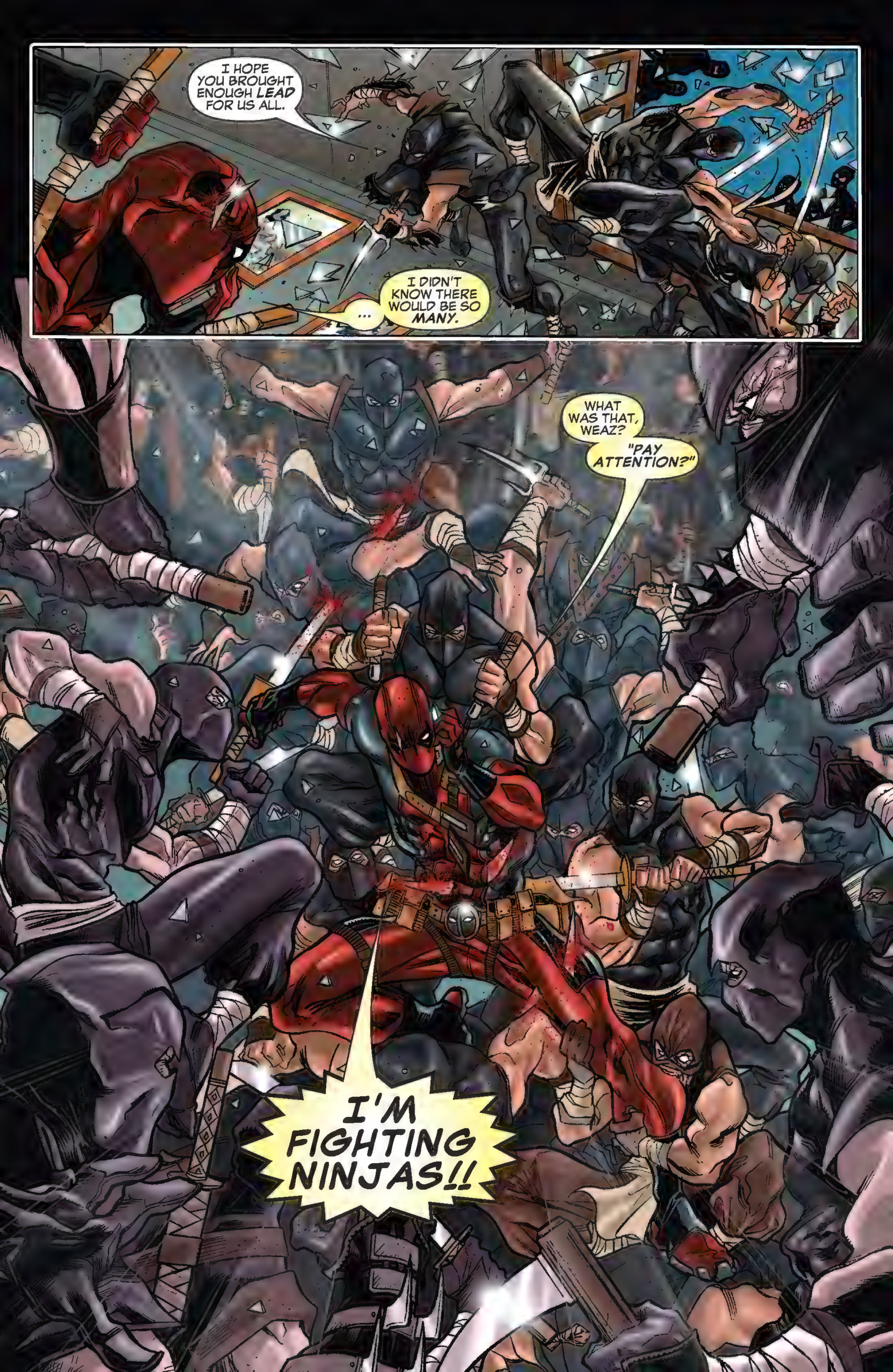

IT'S FUN TO STAY AT THE Y...M. C. A.! IT'S FUN TO STAY AT THE Y...M.C.A.-A!!!
AW, HELL.
WH-WHAT THE...

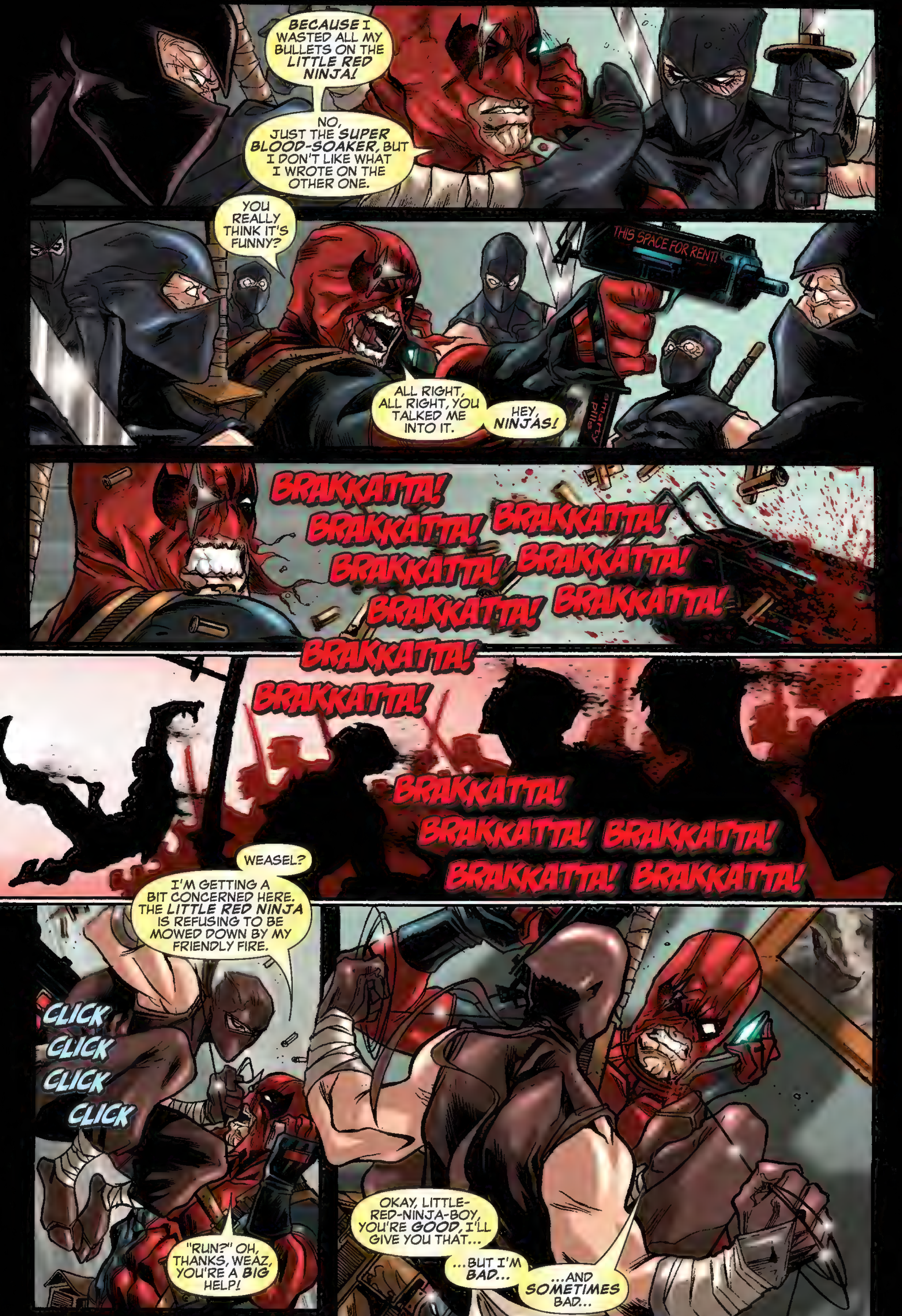

HELLO?
ASSASSIN!!
AHHHHH!
WEASEL?!?
I TOLD YOU NEVER TO CALL ME DURING AN ASSASSINATION!!!
GUARDS!!!!
"SORRY?"
YOU WOKE UP THE MARK.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "HOW DO I KNOW?"
THAT'S HIM SCREAMING IN THE BACKGROUND!
GUARDS!!!!
NO, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING! WHEN I SAID...
THWIP!
THWIP!
THWIP!
THWIP!
THWIP!
THWIP!
THWIP!
YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
SON OF A...!
WEASEL!!!
HE'S GOT NINJA BODY-GUARDS!!!
YOU NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT NINJAS!!!
I SWEAR, IF THEY'RE MUTANT TURTLES AGAIN... I'LL KILL YOU!

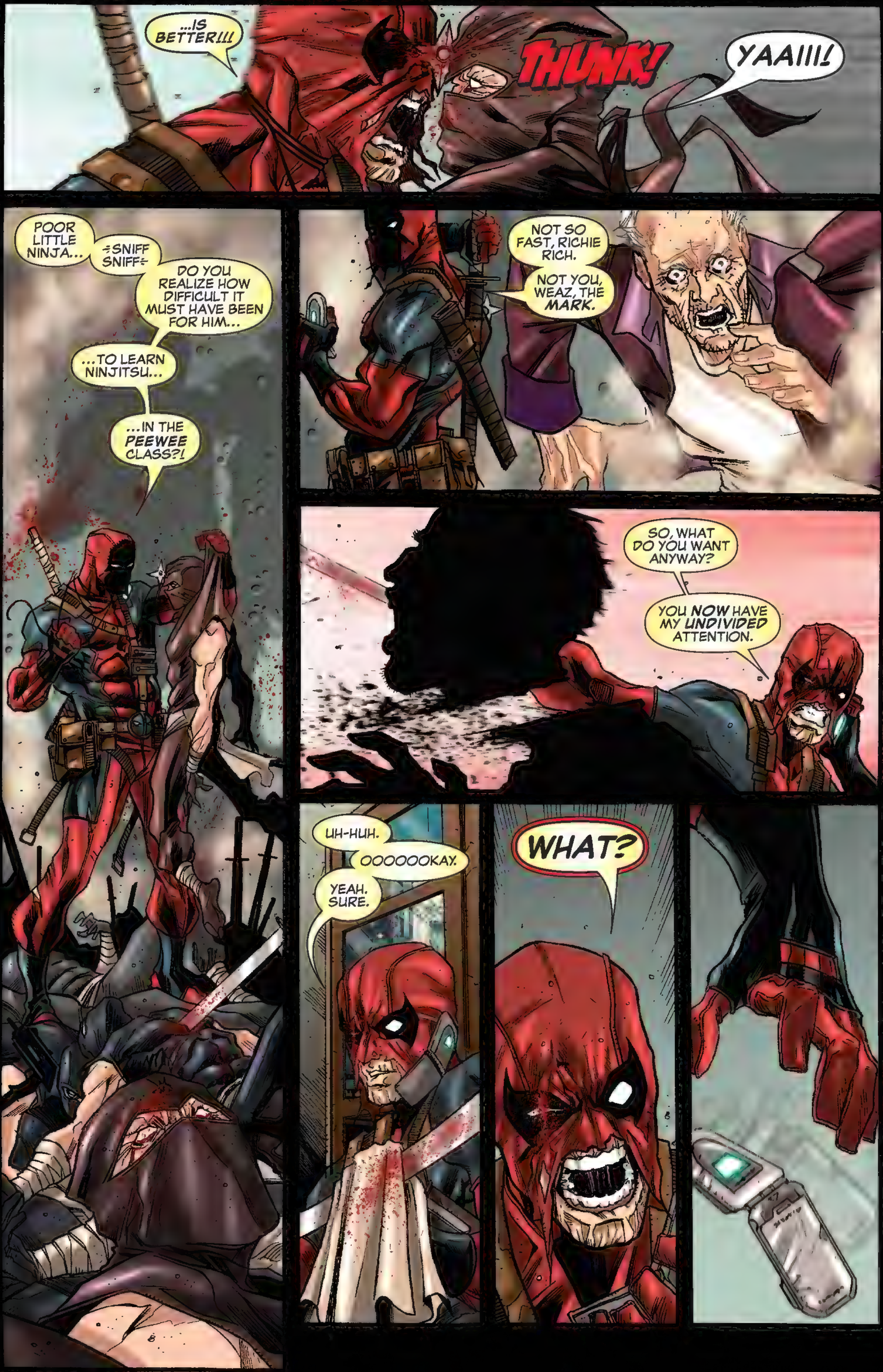
DEADPOOL:
MARVEL'S MANIC MERC WITH A MOUTH
IN
FUN WITH NINJAS

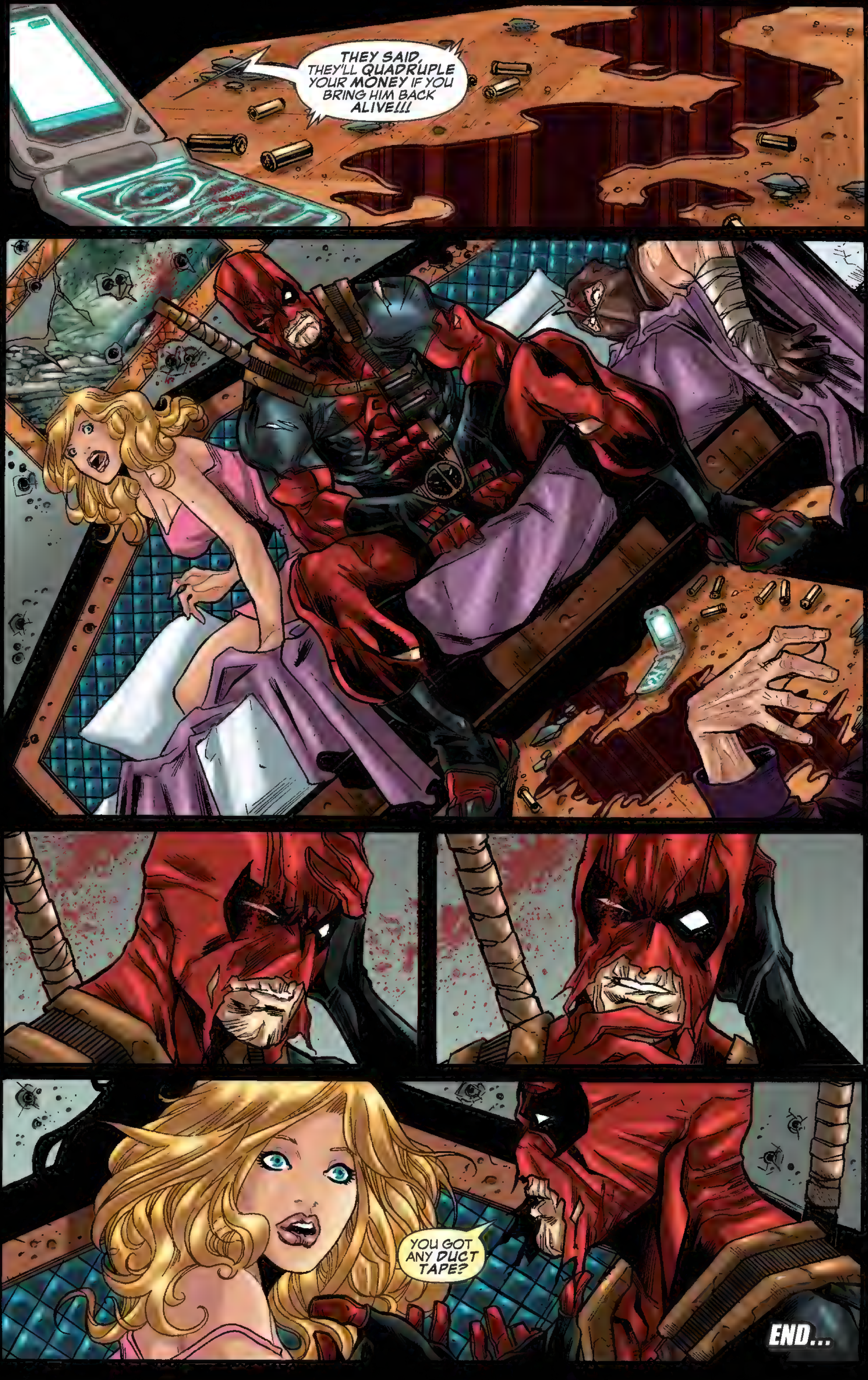
BY JESSE BLAZE SNIDER WRITER
MARCO CHECCHETTO PENCILS, INKS, AND COLORS
DAVE SHARPE LETTERS ANDY SCHMIDT EDITOR
JOE QUESADA CHIEF DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER


THIS IS TOO YOUR FAULT!!!
NOW SHUT UP, I GOT TO KILL ME SOME NINJAS... FOR FREE...BECAUSE OF YOU!!!
OH, NIIIIIIINJAS! COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE!
SUPER SOAKER!
Keep out of DEADPOOL
SHUT UP, WEASEL, I'M NOT LISTENING.
LA, LA, LA.
WAIT, I THINK...
I SEE HIM...
SOAKER!
THE LITTLE RED NINJA.
THE ONE I'M ABOUT TO KILL, NOW SHUT UP FOR A SECOND!
THWIP!
"THWIP?" WHY DO I THINK I'VE HEARD THAT BEFORE?
OOOOUCH!
THUNK
OH, IT'S ON!!!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
I'M GONNA FILL YOU WITH SO MUCH LEAD... THAT...THAT...
...THAT... YOU'LL DIE!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
...ER.
I DON'T HAVE A JOKE FOR EVERYTHING, YOU KNOW!
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
SO, WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME AGAIN?


I HOPE YOU BROUGHT ENOUGH LEAD FOR US ALL.
...
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WOULD BE SO MANY.
WHAT WAS THAT, WEAZ?
"PAY ATTENTION?"
I'M FIGHTING NINJAS!!


BECAUSE I WASTED ALL MY BULLETS ON THE LITTLE RED NINJA!
NO, JUST THE SUPER BLOOD-SOAKER, BUT I DON'T LIKE WHAT I WROTE ON THE OTHER ONE.
YOU REALLY THINK IT'S FUNNY?
THIS SPACE FOR RENT!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, YOU TALKED ME INTO IT.
HEY, NINJAS!
smarty pills
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA! BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA! BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA! BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA! BRAKKATTA!
BRAKKATTA! BRAKKATTA!
WEASEL?
I'M GETTING A BIT CONCERNED HERE. THE LITTLE RED NINJA IS REFUSING TO BE MOWED DOWN BY MY FRIENDLY FIRE.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
"RUN?" OH, THANKS, WEAZ, YOU'RE A BIG HELP!
OKAY, LITTLE-RED-NINJA-BOY, YOU'RE GOOD, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT...
...BUT I'M BAD...
...AND SOMETIMES BAD...


...IS BETTER!!!
THUNK!
YAAIII!
POOR LITTLE NINJA...
=SNIFF SNIFF=
DO YOU REALIZE HOW DIFFICULT IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR HIM...
...TO LEARN NINJITSU...
...IN THE PEEWEE CLASS?!
NOT SO FAST, RICHIE RICH.
NOT YOU, WEAZ, THE MARK.
SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT ANYWAY?
YOU NOW HAVE MY UNDIVIDED ATTENTION.
UH-HUH.
OOOOOOKAY.
YEAH. SURE.
WHAT?


THEY SAID, THEY'LL QUADRUPLE YOUR MONEY IF YOU BRING HIM BACK ALIVE!!!
YOU GOT ANY DUCT TAPE?
END...

After traveling the globe and meeting scores of talented illustrators, intrepid writer, editor and talent manager C.B. Cebulski has recruited fourteen rising star artists to represent the next wave of talent at Marvel Comics! This very comic is meant to showcase the work of these up-and-comers. But with an insider's commentary on how these artists got their work seen and what it was that landed them the gig, this book may just put **YOU** on track to do your own breakout work and break into the comics industry! This is:

BREAKING INTO COMICS
THE MARVEL WAY

Cover Art by Lost Fish

Edited by Daniel Ketchum and Jordan D. White

Editor in Chief: Joe Quesada

Publisher: Dan Buckley

Executive Producer: Alan Fine

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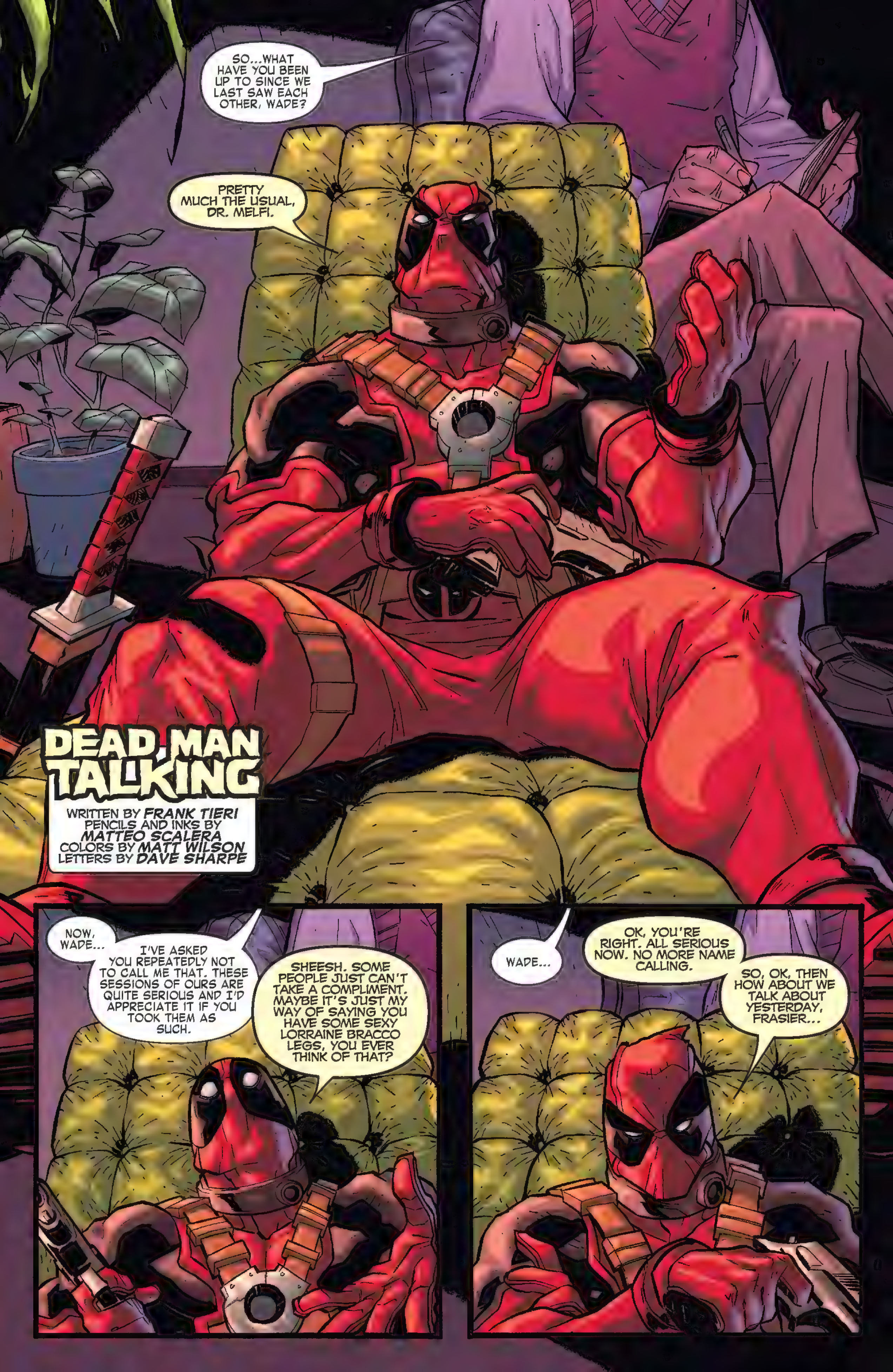
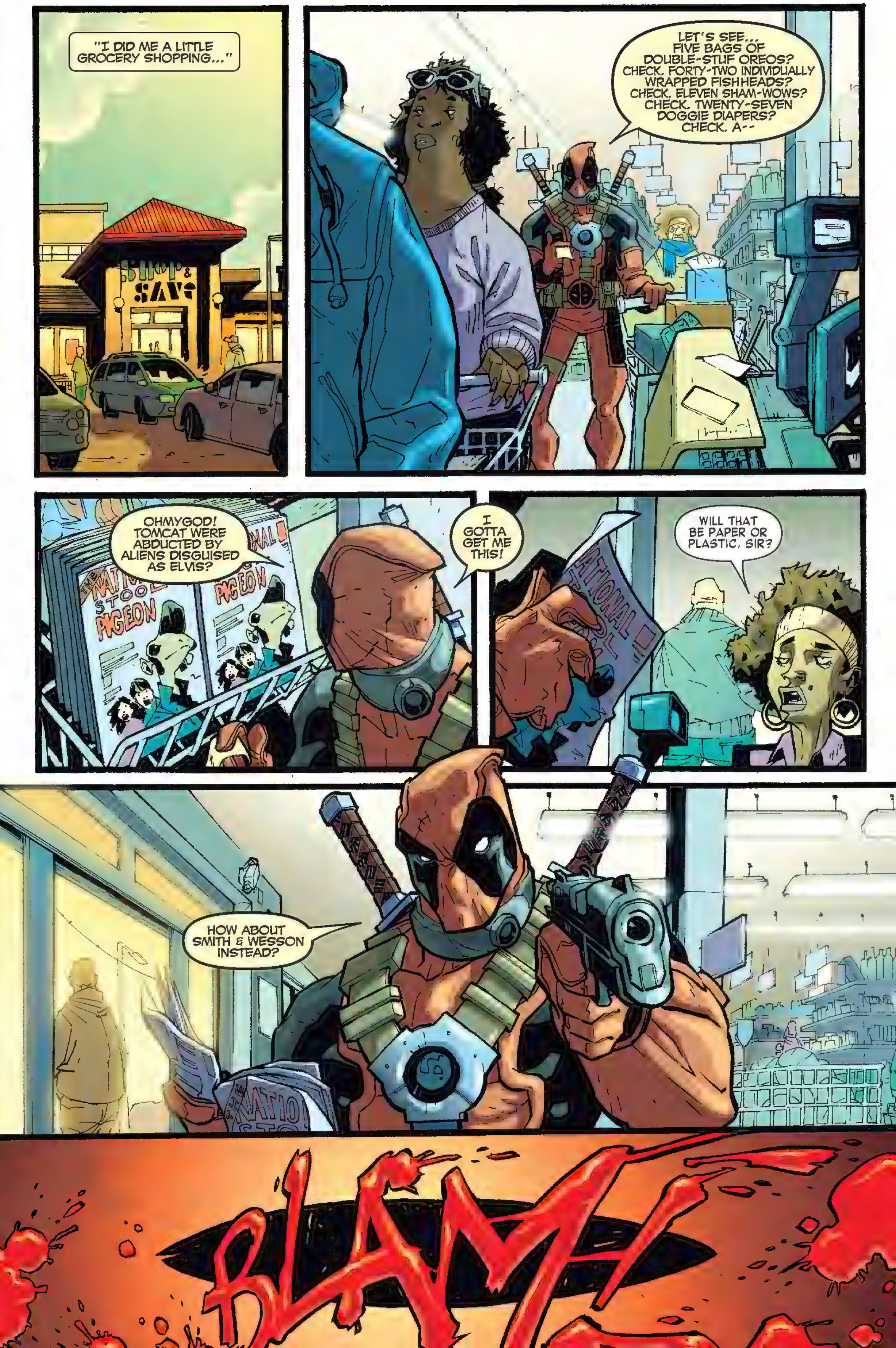
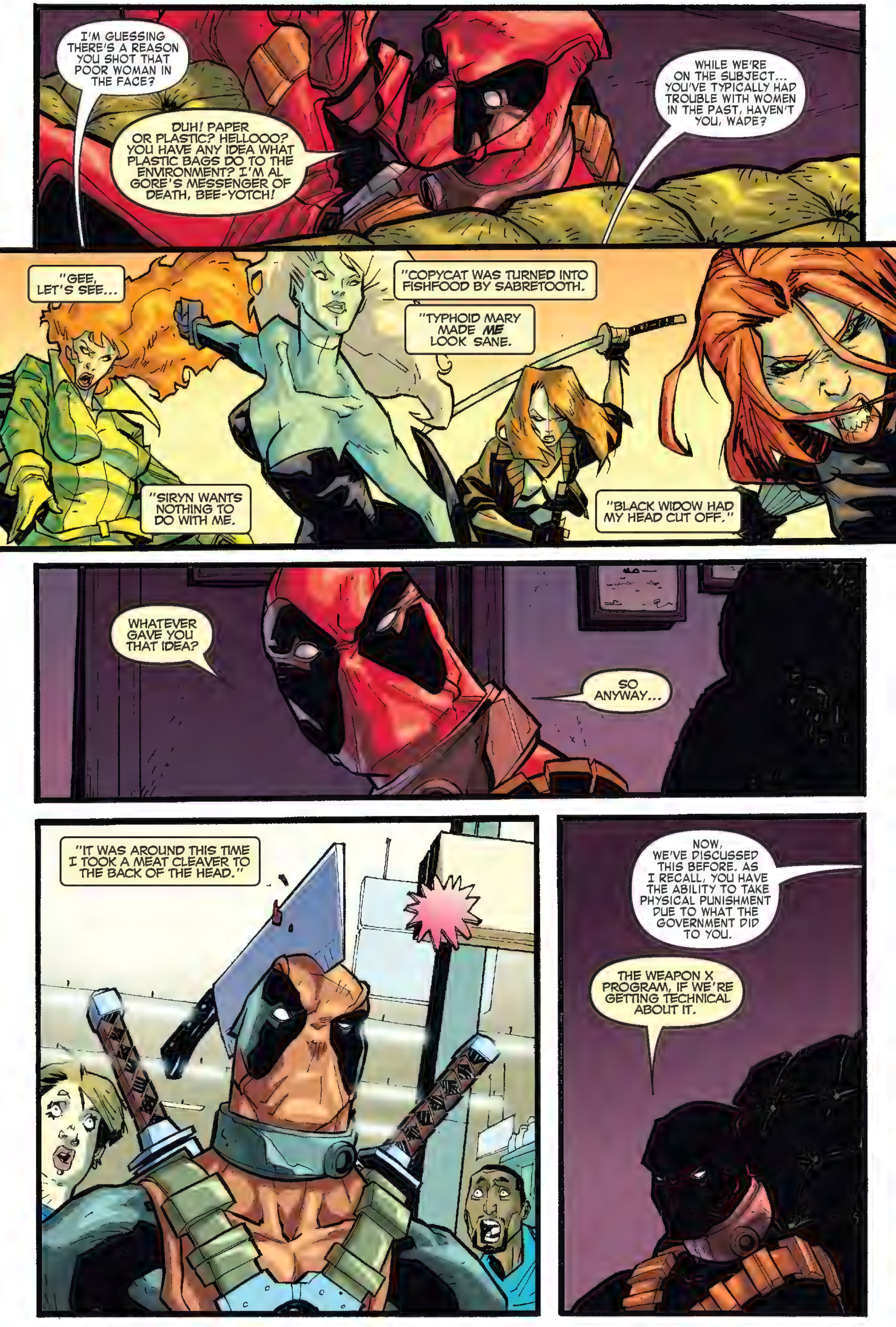
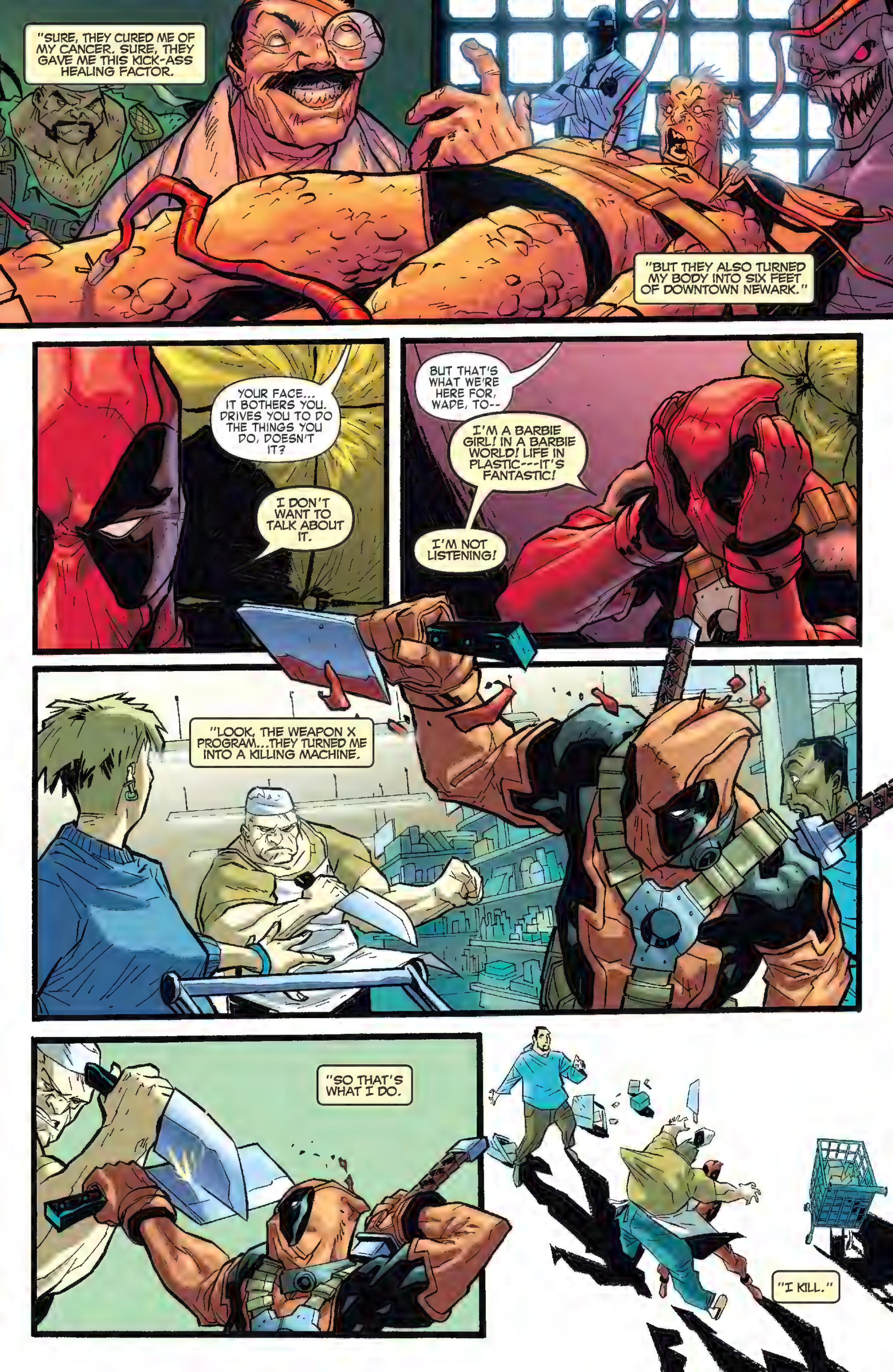
DEAD MAN TALKING

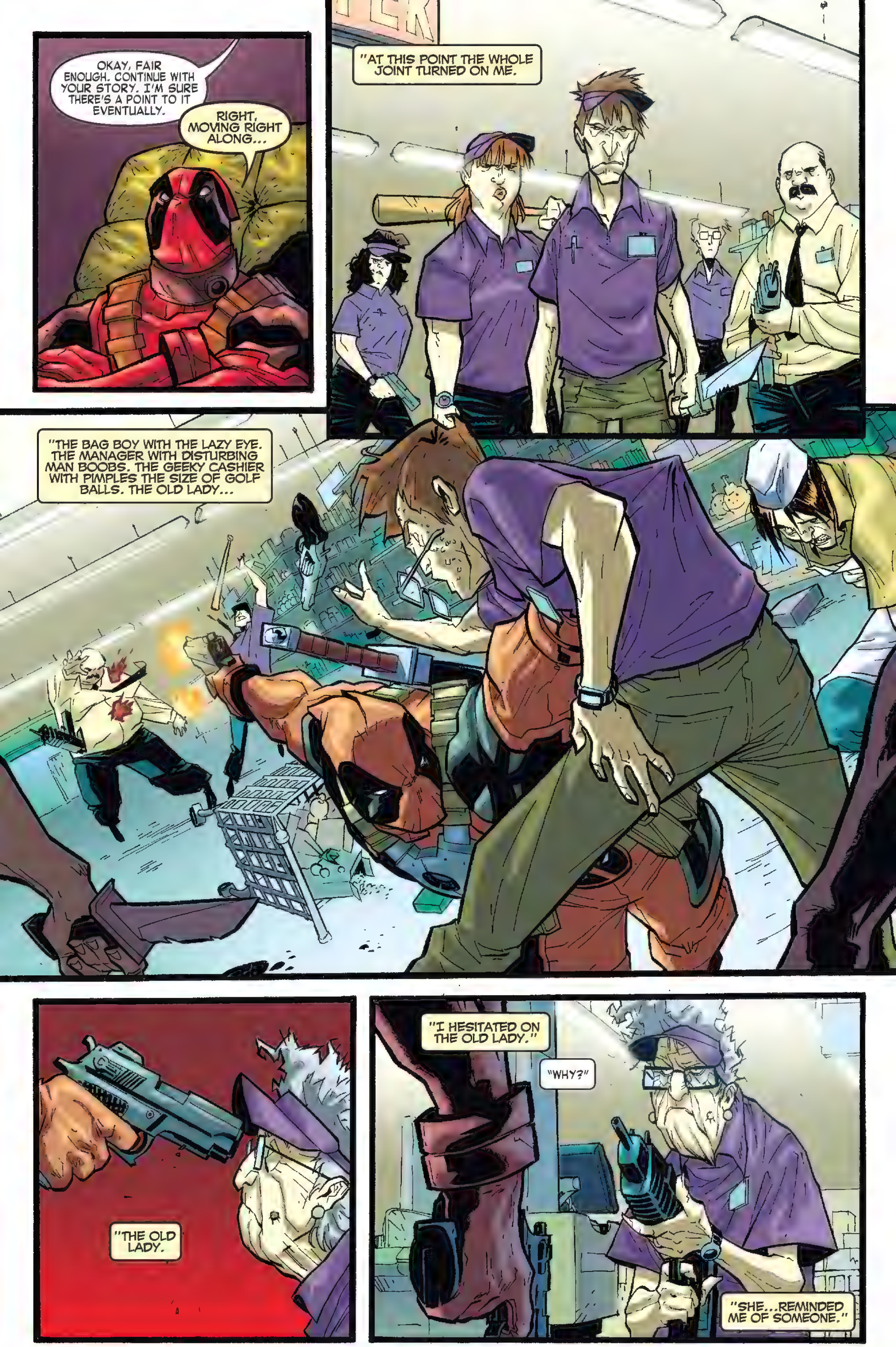
WRITTEN BY **FRANK TIERI**
PENCILS AND INKS BY **MATTEO SCALERA**
COLORS BY **MATT WILSON**
LETTERS BY **DAVE SHARPE**

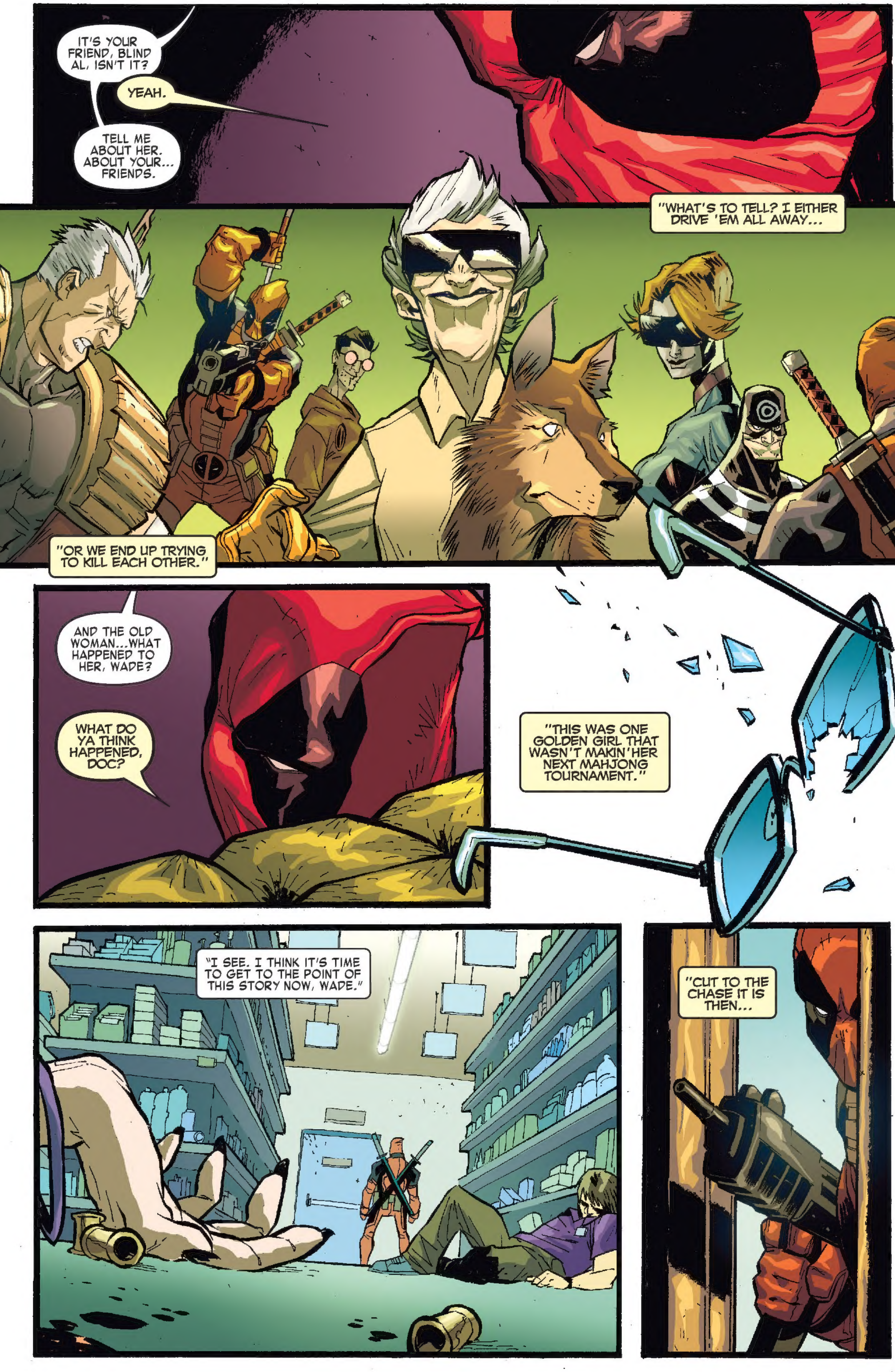

SO...WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE WE LAST SAW EACH OTHER, WADE?
PRETTY MUCH THE USUAL, DR. MELFI.
NOW, WADE...
I'VE ASKED YOU REPEATEDLY NOT TO CALL ME THAT. THESE SESSIONS OF OURS ARE QUITE SERIOUS AND I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU TOOK THEM AS SUCH.
SHEESH. SOME PEOPLE JUST CAN'T TAKE A COMPLIMENT. MAYBE IT'S JUST MY WAY OF SAYING YOU HAVE SOME SEXY LORRAINE BRACCO LEGS, YOU EVER THINK OF THAT?
WADE...
OK, YOU'RE RIGHT. ALL SERIOUS NOW. NO MORE NAME CALLING.
SO, OK, THEN HOW ABOUT WE TALK ABOUT YESTERDAY, FRASIER...

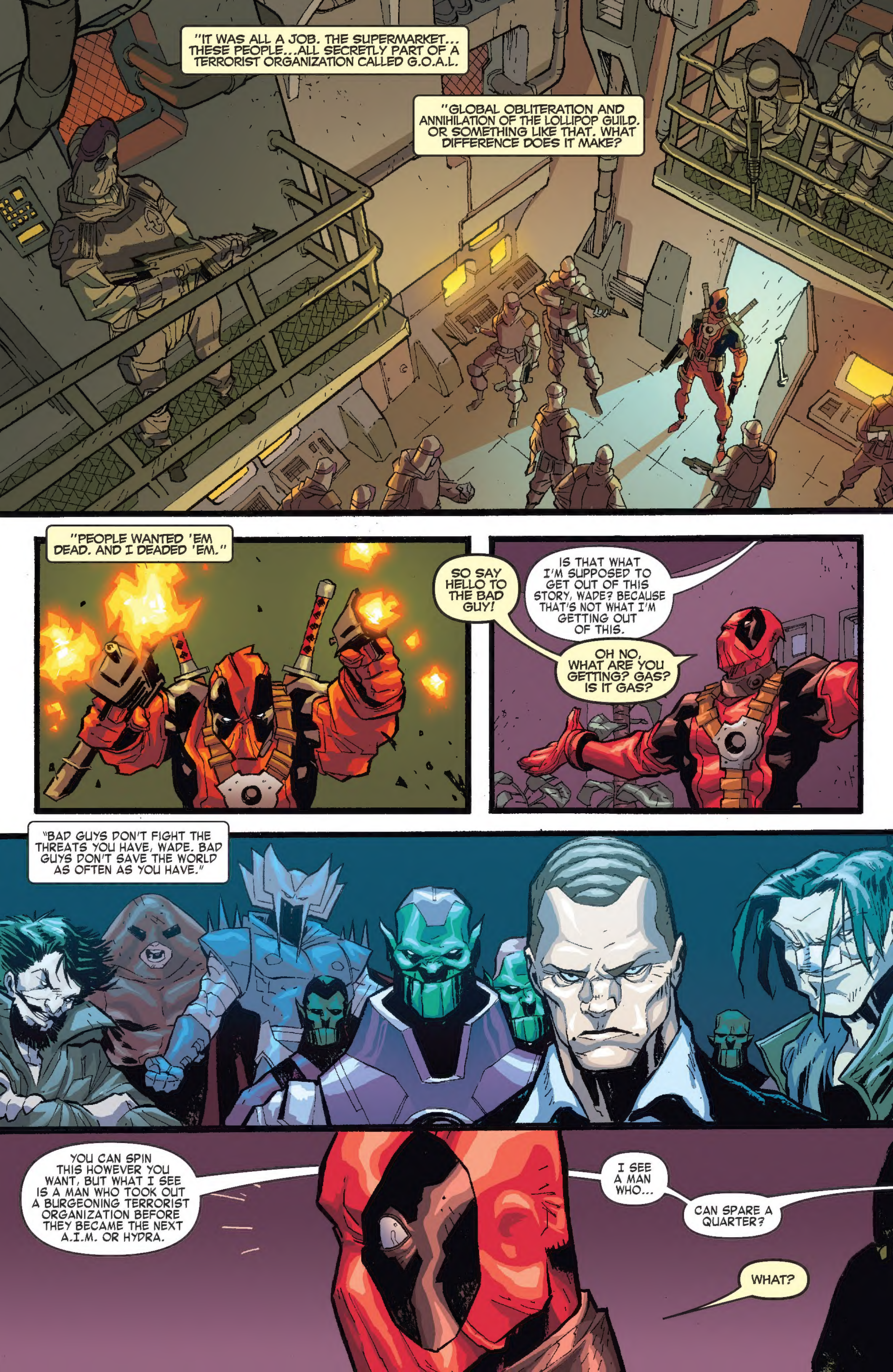

"I DID ME A LITTLE GROCERY SHOPPING..."
SHOP & SAV
LET'S SEE... FIVE BAGS OF DOUBLE-STUF OREOS? CHECK. FORTY-TWO INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED FISHHEADS? CHECK. ELEVEN SHAM-WOWS? CHECK. TWENTY-SEVEN DOGGIE DIAPERS? CHECK. A--
OHMYGOD! TOMCAT WERE ABDUCTED BY ALIENS DISGUISED AS ELVIS?
I GOTTA GET ME THIS!
PIGEON
WILL THAT BE PAPER OR PLASTIC, SIR?
HOW ABOUT SMITH & WESSON INSTEAD?
BLAM!

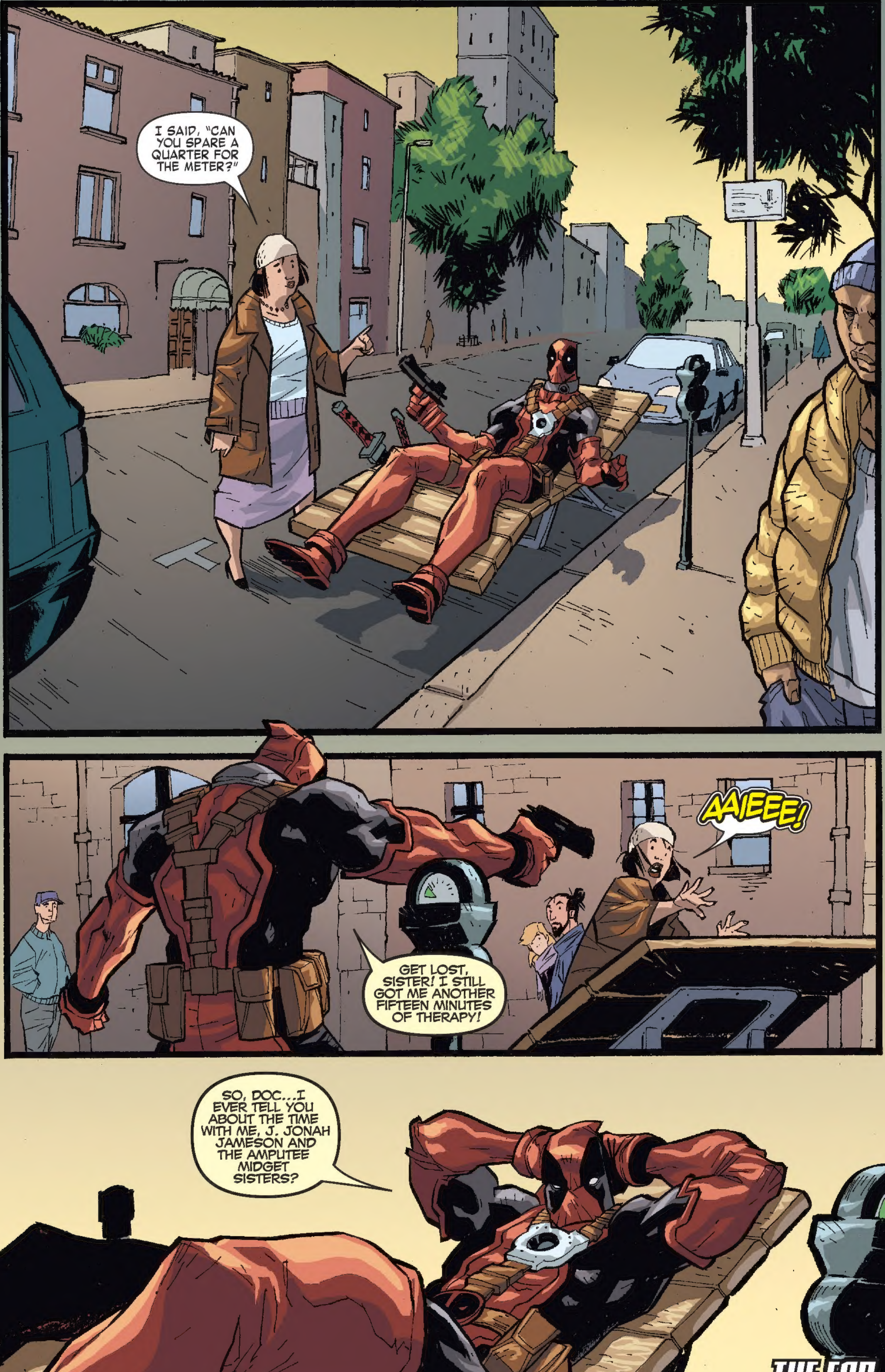

I'M GUESSING THERE'S A REASON YOU SHOT THAT POOR WOMAN IN THE FACE?
DUH! PAPER OR PLASTIC? HELLOOO? YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT PLASTIC BAGS DO TO THE ENVIRONMENT? I'M AL GORE'S MESSENGER OF DEATH, BEE-YOTCH!
WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT... YOU'VE TYPICALLY HAD TROUBLE WITH WOMEN IN THE PAST, HAVEN'T YOU, WADE?
"GEE, LET'S SEE...
"COPYCAT WAS TURNED INTO FISHFOOD BY SABRETOOTH.
"TYPHOID MARY MADE *ME* LOOK SANE.
"SIRYN WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
"BLACK WIDOW HAD MY HEAD CUT OFF."
WHATEVER GAVE YOU THAT IDEA?
SO ANYWAY...
"IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME I TOOK A MEAT CLEAVER TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD."
NOW, WE'VE DISCUSSED THIS BEFORE. AS I RECALL, YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO TAKE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT DUE TO WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DID TO YOU.
THE WEAPON X PROGRAM, IF WE'RE GETTING TECHNICAL ABOUT IT.


"SURE, THEY CURED ME OF MY CANCER. SURE, THEY GAVE ME THIS KICK-ASS HEALING FACTOR.
"BUT THEY ALSO TURNED MY BODY INTO SIX FEET OF DOWNTOWN NEWARK."
YOUR FACE... IT BOTHERS YOU. DRIVES YOU TO DO THE THINGS YOU DO, DOESN'T IT?
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
BUT THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR, WADE, TO--
I'M A BARBIE GIRL! IN A BARBIE WORLD! LIFE IN PLASTIC---IT'S FANTASTIC!
I'M NOT LISTENING!
"LOOK, THE WEAPON X PROGRAM...THEY TURNED ME INTO A KILLING MACHINE.
"SO THAT'S WHAT I DO.
"I KILL."


OKAY, FAIR ENOUGH. CONTINUE WITH YOUR STORY. I'M SURE THERE'S A POINT TO IT EVENTUALLY.
RIGHT, MOVING RIGHT ALONG...
"AT THIS POINT THE WHOLE JOINT TURNED ON ME.
"THE BAG BOY WITH THE LAZY EYE. THE MANAGER WITH DISTURBING MAN BOOBS. THE GEEKY CASHIER WITH PIMPLES THE SIZE OF GOLF BALLS. THE OLD LADY...
"THE OLD LADY.
"I HESITATED ON THE OLD LADY."
"WHY?"
"SHE...REMINDED ME OF SOMEONE."


IT'S YOUR FRIEND, BLIND AL, ISN'T IT?
YEAH.
TELL ME ABOUT HER. ABOUT YOUR... FRIENDS.
"WHAT'S TO TELL? I EITHER DRIVE 'EM ALL AWAY...
"OR WE END UP TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER."
AND THE OLD WOMAN...WHAT HAPPENED TO HER, WADE?
WHAT DO YA THINK HAPPENED, DOC?
"THIS WAS ONE GOLDEN GIRL THAT WASN'T MAKIN' HER NEXT MAHJONG TOURNAMENT."
"I SEE. I THINK IT'S TIME TO GET TO THE POINT OF THIS STORY NOW, WADE."
"CUT TO THE CHASE IT IS THEN...


"IT WAS ALL A JOB. THE SUPERMARKET... THESE PEOPLE...ALL SECRETLY PART OF A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION CALLED G.O.A.L.
"GLOBAL OBLITERATION AND ANNIHILATION OF THE LOLLIPOP GUILD. OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?
"PEOPLE WANTED 'EM DEAD. AND I DEADED 'EM."
SO SAY HELLO TO THE BAD GUY!
IS THAT WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO GET OUT OF THIS STORY, WADE? BECAUSE THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M GETTING OUT OF THIS.
OH NO, WHAT ARE YOU GETTING? GAS? IS IT GAS?
"BAD GUYS DON'T FIGHT THE THREATS YOU HAVE, WADE. BAD GUYS DON'T SAVE THE WORLD AS OFTEN AS YOU HAVE."
YOU CAN SPIN THIS HOWEVER YOU WANT, BUT WHAT I SEE IS A MAN WHO TOOK OUT A BURGEONING TERRORIST ORGANIZATION BEFORE THEY BECAME THE NEXT A.I.M. OR HYDRA.
I SEE A MAN WHO...
CAN SPARE A QUARTER?
WHAT?


I SAID, "CAN YOU SPARE A QUARTER FOR THE METER?"
AAIEEE!
GET LOST, SISTER! I STILL GOT ME ANOTHER FIFTEEN MINUTES OF THERAPY!
SO, DOC...I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME WITH ME, J. JONAH JAMESON AND THE AMPUTEE MIDGET SISTERS?
THE END

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